MARVEL MASTERWORKS
THE INCREDIBLE HULK
VOLUME 16

THE INCREDIBLE HULK Nos. 245-255
& MARVEL TREASURY EDITION No. 25
BILL MANTLO & SAL BUSCEMA
WITH HERB TRIMPE

MARVEL MASTERWORKS

PRESENTS

THE INCREDIBLE HULK

VOLUME 16

COLLECTING

THE INCREDIBLE HULK Nos. 245-255

& MARVEL TREASURY EDITION No. 25

BILL MANTLO • SAL BUSCEMA

WITH HERB TRIMPE

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Nos. 245-255 & Marvel Treasury Edition No. 25

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HULK HEARS A...WHO?

BY JO DUFFY

I had a great time reading the stories in this volume. No surprise there. After all, all three of the principal creators on this run of stories—Bill Mantlo, Sal Buscema and the late Steve Ditko—are or were friends, coworkers and collaborators of mine whose work I have enjoyed and admired most of my life. The editor was all-around top talent, humorist, and great guy, Al Milgrom. And I have always loved the Hulk.

I had worked on these very books while I was Al's assistant editor. And I take pride in my involvement, as we all should. These stories are terrific, fun, absorbing, exciting and they represent what is probably my favorite era in the Hulk's long history.

The Hulk is one of the most interesting, most lovable, most frustrating, maddening and tragic characters in the modern or historic heroic pantheon. He is like a werewolf. He is Mister Hyde, the dark side of a split personality. On the other side of that personality, he is a brilliant, generous, unprepossessing scientist, Dr. Robert Bruce Banner. Banner was, as they said in the TV theme of my childhood, "belted by gamma rays"; and because Banner possesses an almost-unique genetic marker, instead of killing or poisoning him, the gamma ray exposure caused him to mutate into a not-very-bright, huge, nearly invulnerable, unimaginably strong beast with a kind and curious nature, but also with an unreasoning and very quick temper. The Hulk is a great holder of any grudges he can remember…but the worst is for his own alter ego. Puny Banner is the one Hulk hates most of all. And because Banner wants nothing more than to rid the world, and himself, of the Hulk, they spend their lives resenting and trying to hurt each other, when obviously the best thing they could do would be to get together and be friends.

Before the stories here, there was a wonderful issue—co-written by Marvel stalwart Roy Thomas and sci-fi titan Harlan Ellison, and illustrated by Herb Trimpe and Sam Grainger—where a wonderful event occurred. The Hulk was inadvertently shrunken to infinitesimal size and visited the subatomic world of K'ai. Like the Hulk, everyone on K'ai was green-skinned. Even more wonderfully, the Princess of K'ai, Jarella, was a wise, beautiful and kind woman who recognized all of the Hulk's nobler qualities, and loved him for them. She and her people were even able to bring forth a measure of Bruce Banner's personality, so that the tormented dyad within found peace and were able to be accepted by, and live happily among, Jarella's people. When Jarella declared the Hulk to be her husband, the folk of K'ai gladly accepted him as their king. It seemed peace and happiness, and no more fighting (except to protect his new people), were all that lay ahead for a blissful Banner/Hulk.

Except that, up in our world there is actually a military installation run by a bunch of fanatical soldiers who are not the type to let bygones be bygones; and to help them fulfill what they see as their mission, countless tax dollars are perpetually squandered in the development of ever-larger and more extraordinary weapons, designed to kill the unkillable, capture the uncapturable, and generally make life a lonely penance and misery for an ill-tempered but truly well-meaning Hulk. Darn those obsessed military careerists! The happy Hulk might never have troubled anyone again, until the soldiers brought him back to normal size, away from the world where he was happy, respected and loved. Jarella soon followed Hulk to Earth and, saving a human life, was killed.

The Hulk's dream of reuniting with his queen and returning to their people lay in ruins…and that is where this volume begins. The Hulk has been told by an enemy that Jarella's body is being held in the science labs of the Hulkbuster base, reducing the hero's great love to a thing to be experimented upon. The Hulk sets out to rescue Jarella, though he knows she is dead. He wishes to fulfill her last wish, to be taken back to her home and laid to rest on K'ai.

Trouble is, when he gets to Gamma Base, an absolutely obsessed hater is waiting for him. For many years, the base was under the command of General Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross, but Ross, having cracked under the strain of his repeated failures to defeat the Hulk (or discourage the taste for friendship and affection his willful daughter, Betty, had for Bruce Banner.) is living in seclusion in the mountains, under the care of hunky, green-haired, gamma-irradiated Dr. Leonard Samson: The World's Strongest Psychiatrist. Ross' command has fallen to Glenn Talbot, one of the biggest whiners, self-pitying narcissists and sniveling liars in the Marvel Universe. Nothing is ever his fault, and if people don't love and admire him, it's not because he is a jerk. It's because they are treacherous fools who prefer the Hulk and Banner. This toxic warping of reality has caused the here-recent dissolution of Talbot's brief and inexplicable marriage to a clearly-on-the-rebound Betty Ross.

When Hulk reaches the base, he states with simple clarity that he is not there for trouble, but only to retrieve Jarella's remains, to give her a decent burial. But, being on the base where Talbot commands turns Jarella into one more thing of "his" that Talbot is not giving up, so he has his troops trot out every weapon on the premises and put up a huge and senseless fight; and the weapons and entire base are smashed. That is what the Hulk does when provoked. He smashes things. And he gets mad. And the madder he gets, the stronger her gets…so that, as he frequently brags, "Hulk is the strongest one there is!"

With the aid of one-time ally and one-time foe Captain Marvel (the Kree-born warrior Mar-Vell, not his human successor, Carol Danvers) Hulk returns to the Microverse to bring Jarella home to K'ai. To his dismay, much of K'ai lies in ruins. Even worse, though it never seems to penetrate his anger and his grief, the Hulk was unintentionally but directly responsible for this, due to the shock wave caused when he grew from K'ai-size back to Earth-size.

Nevertheless, the people of K'ai are grateful to have their king back, still loyal to him, and very much touched that he has brought Jarella home for burial. The problem is that the only fitting place for her, a lush and verdant garden, is the realm of the literally named Gardener, a star-faring elder being who possesses one of the magnificently powerful, cosmic Infinity Gems (which were, among other things, the subject of the first eighteen or so of the Marvel Cinematic Universe movies). Having grown disenchanted with all of his fellow beings except plants and animals, the Gardener is determined to keep all people from any world out of his personal paradise, by killing them, if need be.

This was when it occurred to me as it never had before that these stories of K'ai bear a perhaps-accidental but charming resemblance to two of my favorite children's books. K'ai could so easily be Whoville, the microscopic home of the Whos in Dr. Seuss' classic *Horton Hears a Who* (where people on a microscopic planet are almost brought to ruin and destroyed by a gigantic protector who loves them dearly but is almost unable to save them from the exigencies of contact with people as huge as we). And then I realized there is another story of the Whos that is in my face everywhere I look right now, because for me, at the time of this writing, it is the winter holiday season. There is another story of Whoville where the Whos are not remarked upon as being small, nor is the fact that they exist in the Microverse touched upon; but they are happy, cheerful, kind, friendly…and despised by a hostile—and apparently prosperous and powerful—being that lives outside their city.

All the green-skins of K'aiville liked people a lot, but the Gardener who lived outside of K'aiville did not. The Gardener hated people from all kinds of places. Don't ask for good reasons: perhaps

their green faces? And he couldn't stop the Hulk from coming, Hulk came. With love for Jarella, Hulk came just the same.

I loved it.

And, when the Hulk leaves K'ai, a lot of other terrific characters join his adventures. Betty Ross shows up in time to tell her ex-husband to stop being a jerk—not that he listens. Luckily, Betty is used to dealing with over-the-top, over-emotional, military nutjobs…but General Ross deserves a lot more sympathy and tolerance here than Talbot. After all, he is her father…and in these issues, Thunderbolt is mentally ill and emotionally exhausted.

Other welcome surprise characters include Rick Jones, the young man Bruce Banner saved from the Gamma Bomb test. For a long time afterward, Rick was his sidekick protected by him, protecting him, but eventually going his own way. Rick, however, discovered in himself a kind of natural aptitude for the role of sidekick, first for Captain America, and then for Captain Marvel…though, by this volume, he is on his own again, still feeling a great deal of loyalty and protectiveness toward Bruce Banner and the Hulk.

Another character I was delighted to revisit is Fred Sloan. Fred was created by Roger Stern and Sal Buscema when Roger was writing this book, and initially Roger's plan was simply to have the Hulk meet "a hippie in a van." Back then, we Marvel writers had a kind of writing convention (possibly begun by Jim Shooter) that when you created a new—and perhaps minor—character whom you hadn't yet named, that character would be shorthanded in story conferences as Fred. Fred the bus driver, Fred the dentist…Fred the hippie. Roger decided it would be very funny to actually name the hippie Fred. He is the only "Fred" I know of whoever actually became Fred. (I have no idea where Sloan came from.)

However, by the time this story takes place Fred is no longer the "peace, love and all is groovy" hippie that Roger envisioned him to be. This is probably in part due to the influence of Bill Mantlo, himself a hippie, but less of the spaced-out flower child and more of the impassioned, intelligent, fighting-for-social-justice kind. You can see what kind of a man Bill was—before the 1992 accident that ended his career and his ability to live independently—in the character of Fred Sloan. He recognizes an injustice; he knows how to write; and he's going to employ that talent for writing to let people know the truth and help the victim of persecution. I doubt Bill even realized he was preserving a perfect self-portrait in the way he developed Fred.

Other great Marvel characters the Hulk and his friends tangle with here include Woodgod—a genetically engineered faun created by Bill and Keith Giffen—and his genetically engineered Changelings, who all look like the stuff of myth come to life. The heroes also encounter star-spanning, powerful, lordly figures like Thor and the Silver Surfer, as well as Golden Age hero Jack Frost (distinctly antiheroic here), in a wonderfully moody tale penciled and inked by Steve Ditko. Keep both eyes out for the 3-D Man. And be certain you beware the U-Foes! Banner also has an adventure of his own, where his heroism in protecting a child from danger gives him a protracted taste of what he longs for: normal, human life.

A theme that recurs throughout these stories is that of ostracism and isolation. Even heroes who know perfectly well that Banner cannot help being the Hulk, and that the Hulk cannot help being intellectually challenged, quick to anger and dangerously powerful, fall into the trap of mocking his stupidity and calling him a monster. Which is a terrible idea. The Hulk knows perfectly well the meaning of the term, he dislikes being insulted and he can even reason out the rudiments of the fact that in treating him this way those who should be his allies act like monsters themselves. In short, do not bother the Hulk if he is not bothering you, do not insult him and never call him a monster.

As a writer myself, I've gone on and on about the stories collected here, but without Steve Ditko's wonderful, whimsical work on issue #249 and Sal's gorgeous pencils and superb inks on the rest of the book, these stories would be less interesting, considerably harder to follow and not nearly as much fun. I've worked with both Steve and Sal and consider myself extraordinarily privileged to have done so. Steve was co-creator of such diverse and spectacular characters as Doctor Strange and Spider-Man, and, at other companies created or co-created characters like Mr. A, Captain Atom, the Blue Beetle and the Question. Michael Golden also contributes some lovely covers.

Sal is a wonderful, versatile penciler and a deft and evocative inker. Here, we get a relatively rare chance to see both those skills applied together. Sal has been gloriously inked by many other wonderful and justly renowned collaborators…it is simply stupendous seeing him ink himself here.

I have had an excellent time reading these stories as I prepared to write this introduction, and I think you, too, will enjoy these tales, which are by turns sweet and fun and just gloriously, spectacularly violent—in the way that razes military bases and terrifies urban planners and alien landscapers but manages not to result in the loss of a single life.

Also, keep an eye out for the splash page of the Silver Surfer in the Arctic Circle. I remember the day it came into the office, as well as the conversation that Al and I had when we saw it, leading to one of the most charming and honest captions I ever hope to read.

Finally, hats off to Al for everything he did to help Sal, Bill and Steve—and the terrific colorists and letterers who supported them—do the fantastic work they did here, whether it was by coaching them, or keeping them on schedule or just staying out of the way and having a great time enjoying the work they did, as I have done, and now you should do, too…because, if you don't, Jo just may smash!

– Jo Duffy
2021

Jo Duffy began a decade-long tenure as a member of the Marvel editorial staff in 1977 where she helped guide titles including early issues of Frank Miller's Daredevil, *Bill Mantlo's* The Incredible Hulk *and the creator-owned Epic line. She has also written* Power Man and Iron Fist, Star Wars, The Saga of Crystar *and* Fallen Angels *for Marvel,* Catwoman *for DC Comics and* Glory *for Image's Maximum Press.*

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MARVEL'S TV SENSATION!

THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

MILGROM '79

Caught in the heart of a ***Nuclear Explosion,*** victim of ***Gamma-Radiation*** gone wild, ***Doctor Robert Bruce Banner*** now finds himself transformed in times of stress into seven feet, one thousand pounds of unfettered ***Fury***—the most powerful creature to ever walk the earth—

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INCREDIBLE HULK!®

AT FIRST HE IS NO MORE THAN A SPECK ON THE HORIZON...

THEN THE THUNDER OF HIS APPROACH BREAKS ACROSS THE DESERT AS HE COVERS VAST DISTANCES WITH INCREDIBLE LEAPS!

HE HAS TRAVELLED MANY MILES, TRAVERSED MANY FOREIGN LANDS, DRIVEN BY THE RAGE SMOLDERING IN HIS MONSTER'S HEART.

RAGE FANNED INTO FLAME BY AN ENEMY'S RECENT MOCKING WORDS: "THE PLACE YOU KNOW AS GAMMA BASE IS FAR AWAY, AND WITHIN ITS CHAMBERS IS A SPECIMEN TUBE PRESERVING THE LAST REMAINS OF AN ALIEN FEMALE. I BELIEVE YOU KNEW THE DECEASED...?"

JARELLA!

THROOM THROOM THROOM THROOM

BILL & SAL MANTLO BUSCEMA
WRITER-STORYTELLERS-ARTIST

JOE ROSEN, LETTERS
G.ROUSSOS, COLORS

ALLEN MILGROM, EDITOR

JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LF663

NOW HE HAS ARRIVED AT GAMMA BASE, AND NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN STAND IN HIS WAY...

WHEN THE HULK COMES RAGING!

KATHROOMM!

HULK KNEW SOLDIERS WOULD BE WAITING FOR HIM! BUT HULK CAME ANYWAY BECAUSE SOLDIERS KEEP JARELLA IN GLASS TUBE!

JARELLA WAS THE HULK'S FRIEND! HULK WILL TAKE HER OUT OF THIS PLACE, AND NOT ALL THE LITTLE MEN WITH THEIR PUNY GUNS CAN STOP HIM!

RING HIM IN A CIRCLE OF STEEL! HE MAY HAVE ENTERED GAMMA BASE-- BUT HE WON'T LEAVE HERE ALIVE!

PRELIMINARY SIGHTINGS VERIFIED! IT'S THE HULK-- HE'S HERE!!

DON'T FIRE ANY WARNING SHOTS! THE COLONEL'S ORDERS ARE "SHOOT TO KILL"! HE WANTS THAT MONSTER'S HEAD!

LET'S HOPE WE'VE GOT THE FIREPOWER TO GIVE THE COLONEL WHAT HE WANTS-- 'CAUSE I'VE NEVER SEEN THE HULK SO MAD!

IMAGINE THE SCENE: THE MIGHTIEST MORTAL EVER TO STRIDE THE FACE OF THE EARTH...

...ENCIRCLED BY THE MILITARY MIGHT OF GAMMA BASE--

--AN INSTALLATION CREATED SOLELY TO CAGE THE HULK...OR DESTROY HIM!

BUT THE SOLDIERS TO WHOM THAT MISSION WAS ENTRUSTED ARE, ALAS, ALL TOO HUMAN!

AND, THOUGH THE WEAPONS THEY WIELD ARE FEARSOME INDEED...

MORE FEARSOME STILL IS THE BALEFUL GLARE OF AN ANGRY HULK!

WHERE IS JARELLA?

BRADDOCK TO GAMMA BASE COMMAND! I *KNOW* I'M WHISPERING, SIR! I DON'T WANT TO ANTAGONIZE THE HULK! NO, SIR, HE'S JUST STANDING THERE, SEEMINGLY TALKING TO HIMSELF!

"WHAT, SIR? NO, I DON'T THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO TRY TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO HEAR WHAT HE'S SAYING!"

IMAGINE: TIME SUSPENDED... NERVES STRUNG ON A RAZOR'S EDGE!

WHAT'S THE BRUTE DOING? WHY DOESN'T HE ATTACK?!

HE'S PROBABLY WONDERING THE SAME THING ABOUT US!

SOLDIERS CONFUSE HULK! INSTEAD OF SHOOTING, THEY WAIT! WAITING MAKES HULK FORGET WHY HE IS HERE...

TCHIK!

IT IS ONLY THE SOUND OF A SAFETY INADVERTANTLY BEING RELEASED...

BUT IT IS SUFFICIENT TO JOG THE HULK'S MEMORY!

JARELLA! SOLDIERS HAVE JARELLA!

AND, DREDGED UP WITH THE MEMORIES, COMES ALL THE FRUSTRATION, ALL THE RAGE...

ARRGHH

ALL THE HULK'S PAIN AT THE REMEMBRANCE OF HIS BELOVED JARELLA'S DEATH!

JARELLA CAME TO EARTH BECAUSE SHE LOVED HULK... NEEDED HULK'S HELP!

BUT HULK FAILED JARELLA, AND HULK'S WORLD KILLED HER!*

*OR, TO BE MORE PRECISE, THE CRYPTO-MAN DID IN HULK#205--AL.

NOW HULK HAS COME TO TAKE JARELLA HOME!

INCREDIBLY POWERFUL, EMERALD FISTS DRIVE DOWN AT THE ALREADY SHATTERED TARMAC OF GAMMA BASE'S LANDING STRIP...

AND, IN ONE AWESOME INSTANT, WARRIORS AND WEAPONS ARE LIFTED BY THE RESULTANT SHOCK-WAVE...

AND DROPPED LIKE SO MANY DISCARDED TOYS!

KWADOOM!

PATTON'S GHOST! THE HULK'S RENDERED HALF OUR DEFENSES NON-OPERATIONAL WITH ONE SWIPE OF HIS FISTS! REGROUP! PULL TOGETHER WHATEVER'S LEFT...

AND, ON MY COMMAND: READY-- AIM--

FIRE!

FEELING JUSTIFIED THAT IT WAS THE HULK AND NOT THEY WHO MADE THE FIRST MOVE, THE GUARDIANS OF GAMMA BASE RETALIATE...

SOLDIERS SHOOT AT THE HULK!

STUPID SOLDIERS! ROCKETS CAN'T HURT THE HULK!

BUT HULK CAN TAKE ALL THE ROCKETS--

--AND CRUSH THEM TOGETHER INTO A BIG METAL BALL!

A BALL HULK CAN THROW BACK AT SOLDIERS!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SOLDIERS? WHY DON'T YOU SHOOT AT HULK NOW?!

WE'RE LIKE ANTS TRYING TO FIGHT A DINOSAUR! FALL BACK!

KRUMPH!

RUN AWAY, SOLDIERS! RUN AWAY FROM THE HULK! HULK DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOU!

HULK HAS COME TO TAKE JARELLA HOME, AND YOU ARE ONLY IN THE HULK'S WAY!

BUT, IF THE HULK BELIEVES WINNING A SKIRMISH IS THE SAME AS WINNING A WAR, HE IS SADLY MISTAKEN!

FOR ALREADY THE NEXT ASSAULT UPON HIM IS ABOUT TO BEGIN-- IN NUMBERS THAT DARKEN THE SKY!

AIRBORNE STRIKE FORCE-- COMMENCE DROP!

CAREFUL! WE'RE ONLY GONNA GET ONE SHOT AT HIM!

HUNH? SHADOWS FALL OVER THE HULK?!

GET READY! HE'S SEEN US!

DROP *GRAVITY-NETS...* NOW!!

SOLDIERS TRY TO TRAP THE HULK IN SILLY NETS!

DON'T STUPID SOLDIERS KNOW THAT HULK WILL JUST TEAR NETS TO--! ARRGH!

NETS GROW HEAVY! FORCE THE HULK DOWN TO GROUND!

HULK... CANNOT STAND! CAN'T RAISE ARMS... TO TEAR SILLY NETS!

HE'S OURS! THE NETS INCREASE THE PULL OF GRAVITY ON HIM IN PROPORTION TO HIS RESISTANCE!

AND EVEN THE HULK CAN'T FIGHT GRAVITY MULTPLIED *THAT* MANY TIMES!

PERHAPS NOT. PERHAPS, AGAINST THE CRUSHING DOWNWARD PULL OF THE VERY PLANET ITSELF, EVEN THE GAMMA-IRRADIATED MIGHT OF THE HULK IS POWERLESS!

PERHAPS--YET STILL HE STRAINS AGAINST THE CRUSHING FORCE...

FOR, THOUGH IN THE PAST, MEN HAVE CALLED THE HULK MINDLESS, THE EMERALD BEHEMOTH POSSESSES ENOUGH INTELLIGENCE TO RECOGNIZE THE WEAK LINK IN THE SOLDIERS' ENSNAREMENT!

THOUGH PROJECTING A GRAVITY FIELD, THE *NET* ITSELF IS MERE TITANIUM MESH!

AND NOTHING MADE BY MAN CAN LONG WITHSTAND THE POWER OF THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

BUT HIS AWESOME EFFORT HAS NOT WON THE HULK SO MUCH AS A MOMENT'S BREATHING SPACE!

UNHHH!

ZAP!

AGAIN SOLDIERS ATTACK THE HULK-- SHOOTING RAYS AT HIM FROM FLYING TANKS, TRYING TO DRIVE THE HULK AWAY! BUT HULK WON'T LEAVE 'TIL HE GETS JARELLA.

THIS IS MADNESS! THAT MONSTER'S TEARING GAMMA BASE APART WITH HIS BARE HANDS-- AND WE'RE WASTING MILLIONS OF THE TAXPAYER'S DOLLARS KEEPING HIM FROM THE BODY OF A DEAD ALIEN! WHY??

BECAUSE THOSE ARE THE COLONEL'S ORDERS, AIRMAN-- AND I'D HATE TO BE THE ONE TO TELL HIM HE'S WRONG!

INCREDIBLE! THESE *NEURO-RAYS* WE'RE FIRING COULD PARALYZE A HERD OF ELEPHANTS, BUT THE HULK'S JUST SHRUGGING THEM OFF!

ALWAYS MEN TRY TO HURT HULK! ALWAYS THEY TRY TO KILL HULK! WHY? *WHY??* HULK DOESN'T WANT TO FIGHT PUNY SOLDIERS!

HULK JUST WANTS JARELLA-- TO TAKE HER FROM THIS PLACE OF SOLDIERS!

AND, IF THE HULK MUST TEAR GAMMA BASE APART TO REACH JARELLA-- *THEN THAT IS WHAT HE WILL DO!!*

L-LOOK OUT, HE'S--!!

SVAK!

SKRAK!

KAVAM!

AND, IN THE END...

ARE SOLDIERS DONE ATTACKING HULK? HAVE SOLDIERS HAD ENOUGH? NOW WILL SOLDIERS GO AWAY AND LET HULK TAKE JARELLA HOME?!

NO, YOU MISBEGOTTEN MONSTROSITY-- WE WON'T JUST GO AWAY!

HUNH??

YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST WALK ALL OVER GAMMA BASE AND GET WHAT YOU WANT, DON'T YOU? YOU'VE BEEN DOING THAT FOR YEARS, YOU ANIMAL--DEFYING ALL OUR EFFORTS TO STOP YOU!

BUT THAT ENDS TODAY, HULK!

YOU'VE DESTROYED EVERYTHING I LOVE!

YOUR MINDLESS RAGES HAVE COST ME MY WIFE, MY FATHER-IN-LAW... AND, NEARLY, MY LIFE!

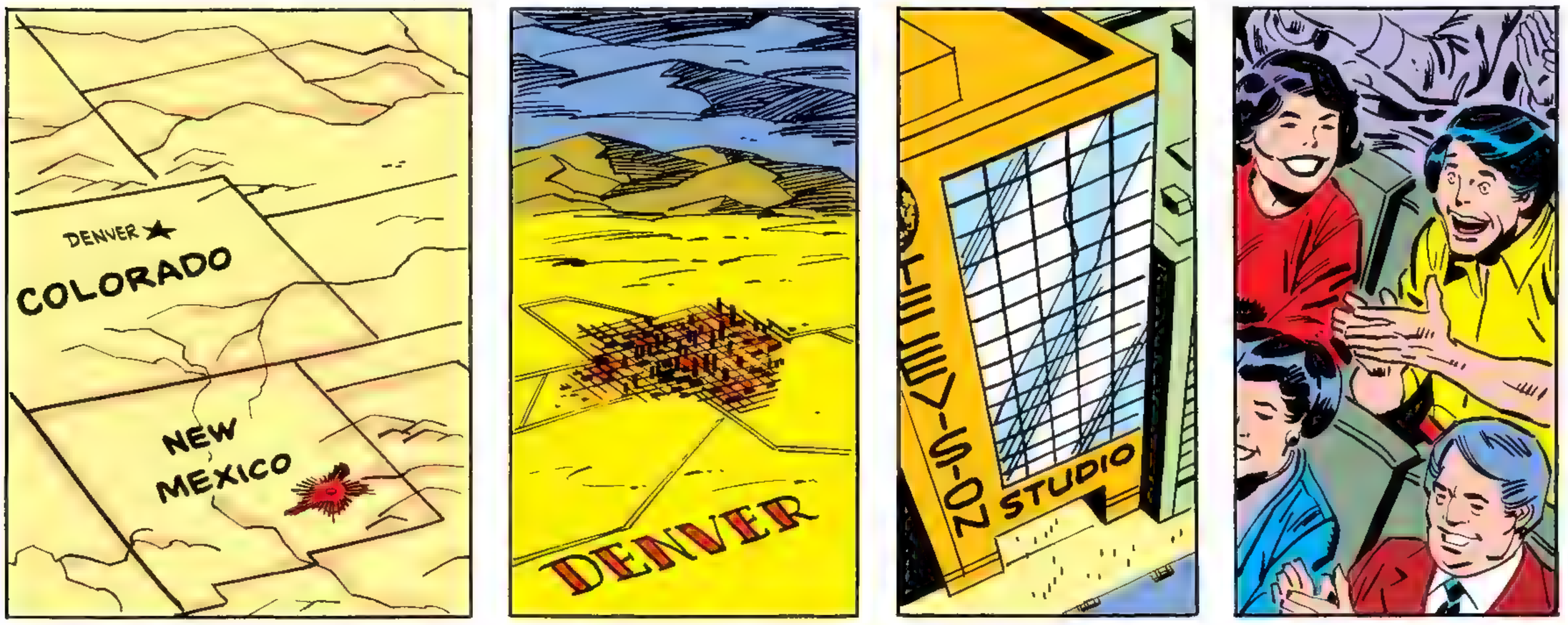
YOU! HULK KNOWS YOUR VOICE!

THAT'S RIGHT, MONSTER! IT'S I, ***COLONEL GLENN TALBOT,*** COMMANDING OFFICER OF GAMMA BASE SINCE YOU DROVE GENERAL "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS TO A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN! BUT YOU WON'T BREAK ***ME,*** MONSTER!

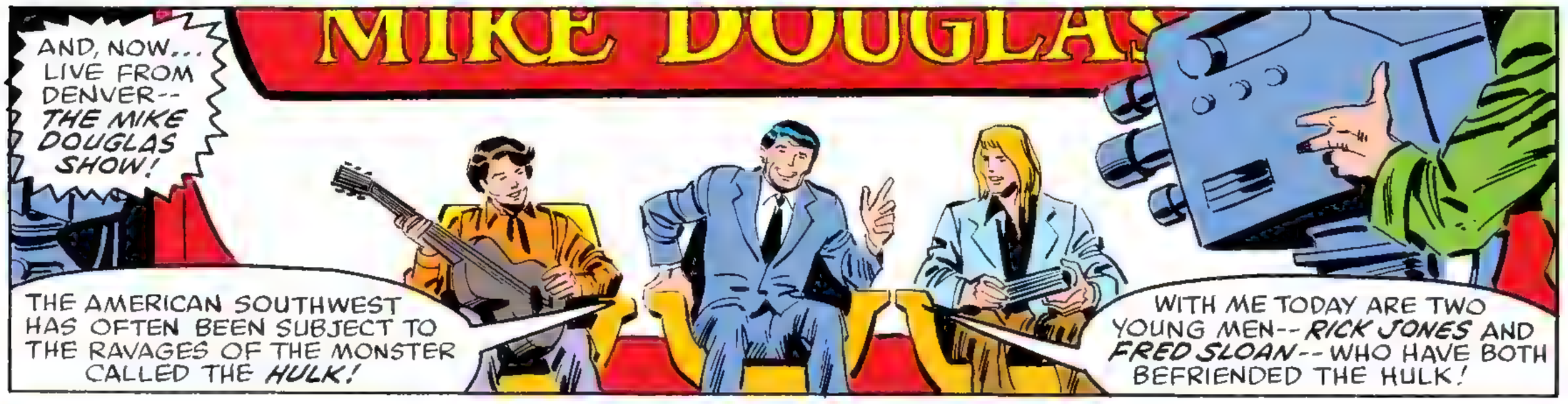
I'VE WANTED TO SEE YOU DEAD FOR YEARS! AND NOW, IN THE ARMOR OF THE **SUPER-MANDROID** REQUISITIONED FROM *SHIELD,** I'VE GOT THE POWER TO DESTROY YOU *MYSELF!!*

**THE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED SECRET SERVICE ORGANIZATION.--AL.*

BUT AMERICA IS A HUGE COUNTRY AND, ALTHOUGH HIS IMPENDING BATTLE AT NEW MEXICO'S GAMMA BASE WITH THE HULK IS ALL-IMPORTANT TO COL. GLENN TALBOT...



...IT IS, AS YET, NOT EVEN A NEWS ITEM IN DENVER, COLORADO WHERE LOCAL PROGRAMMERS ARE PLAYING HOST TO A VISITING CELEBRITY!


AND, NOW... LIVE FROM DENVER-- THE MIKE DOUGLAS SHOW!
THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST HAS OFTEN BEEN SUBJECT TO THE RAVAGES OF THE MONSTER CALLED THE HULK!
WITH ME TODAY ARE TWO YOUNG MEN-- RICK JONES AND FRED SLOAN-- WHO HAVE BOTH BEFRIENDED THE HULK!

"RICK HERE, HAS KNOWN THE HULK SINCE THE BEGINNING, AND THROUGH THE MONSTER'S TUMULTUOUS-- IF BRIEF-- TENURE AS AN AVENGER!
"LATER, RICK BECAME CAPTAIN AMERICA'S PARTNER--
"--THEN AN ASSOCIATE OF CAPTAIN MARVEL'S!
"TODAY, RICK IS A POPULAR SINGER-PERFORMER!

"FRED SLOAN IS A WRITER. HE SAYS HE MET THE HULK IN A-- ER-- CALIFORNIA BAR!
BAR GRILL
"FRED AND THE HULK THEN TRAVELLED TOGETHER IN FRED'S VAN--
"--UNTIL THE HULK WAS PROVOKED INTO A DESTRUCTIVE RAGE--
"--WHICH LED TO A BATTLE WITH MACHINE MAN!"

YOUR LAST SENTENCE REALLY SUMMED IT UP, MIKE! THE HULK WAS "PROVOKED"! HE WOULD BE HARMLESS IF LEFT ALONE-- BUT SOMEONE... SOME POWER-MAD SUPER-VILLAIN OR THE MILITARY... ALWAYS PROVOKES HIM!

AND YOU KEEP CALLING HIM A MONSTER, MIKE! HE'S NOT! THE HULK IS A MAN--A BRILLIANT PHYSICIST NAMED BRUCE BANNER.

THE BRAIN OF A GENIUS-- TRAPPED IN THE BODY OF A BRUTE!

AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION, THE TAPING OF THE "MIKE DOUGLAS SHOW" ENDS, AND RICK AND FRED ARE JOINED BACKSTAGE BY...

TRISH STARR! HEY, I'VE REALLY GOTTA THANK YOU FOR SETTING UP THIS TV SPOT!

IT SEEMED LIKE THE IDEAL PLACE TO RESEARCH THE BOOK YOU'RE WRITING ABOUT THE HULK, FRED, SINCE WE KNEW RICK WOULD BE HERE!

BOOK?

YEAH. I'D LIKE TO GET THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HULK IN PRINT-- THAT HE'S NOT JUST A MINDLESS MONSTER! SAY, DO YOU KNOW THAT DUDE WHO'S BEEN STARING AT US, RICK?

HUH? WHO--? SUNNUVAGUN! IT'S CAPTAIN MARVEL... AND HIS LADY LOVE ELYSIUS!

WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING IN DENVER??

OBSERVING YOUR INTERVIEW-- ADMIRING YOUR LOYALTY TOWARDS A CREATURE THE WORLD AT LARGE HATES AND FEARS--EH?

FLASH...

...THIS WORD JUST IN FROM OUR SISTER STATION IN NEW MEXICO! THE TOP-SECURITY MILITARY INSTALLATION KNOWN AS GAMMA BASE HAS COME UNDER ATTACK BY THE HULK! NO CAUSE FOR THE HULK'S ACTION HAS BEEN CITED--

--BUT THE PENTAGON HAS APPROVED BASE COMMANDER COL. GLENN TALBOT'S REQUEST TO ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE HULK!

OH, NO! THERE GOES THE ENTIRE CASE WE BUILT UP FOR THE HULK RIGHT DOWN THE TUBES!

MAR-VELL, WHAT--?!

REMEMBER EON'S* WORDS, ELYSIUS?

*EON: AN 8 BILLION YEAR OLD ENTITY WHO GRANTED CAPTAIN MARVEL COSMIC AWARENESS -- AL.

EARTH IS THE HOPE OF THE FUTURE!

AND I AM EARTH'S SWORN PROTECTOR.

I FEAR THAT NOW I MUST PROTECT IT FROM THE HULK!

BUT, MARV-- THE HULK IS LINKED TO EARTH'S FATE, TOO!

THAT IS A FACT THE COSMICALLY AWARE CAPTAIN MARVEL ALREADY KNOWS!

BUT THE HULK MAY BE BEYOND THE PALE OF CAPTAIN MARVEL'S CONCERN LONG BEFORE THAT ALIEN WARRIOR'S FLIGHT CARRIES HIM TO NEW MEXICO!

GRRAGHH!

THAT'S RIGHT, HULK-- SNARL LIKE THE ANIMAL YOU ARE! THE SOUND OF YOUR PAIN IS LIKE MUSIC TO MY EARS!

TALBOT SENDS ELECTRICITY THROUGH HIS ARMOR TO HURT THE HULK!

BUT ELECTRICITY CAN'T HURT THE HULK IF HE MAKES TALBOT LET GO!!

WHAT--?! Y-YOU'RE PULLING ME OFF MY FEET?!?

SKAAAM!

HULK REMEMBERS YOU, TALBOT! YOU ARE PUNY SOLDIER WHO HAS ALWAYS HATED THE HULK! BUT YOU ARE WEAK! IT IS ONLY SHINY ARMOR THAT MAKES YOU STRONG NOW!

BUT HULK DOESN'T NEED ARMOR!

HULK IS THE STRONGEST ONE THAT LIVES!!

ARRH!

ZWAM!

THAT IS WHY YOU'LL HAVE TO DIE, HULK!

YOU'RE TOO STRONG!

YOU MAKE A MOCKERY OF US...OF OUR MACHINES, OF OUR WEAPONS, OF OUR DEFENSES! YOU MUST BE DESTROYED, HULK-- FOR OUR PEACE OF MIND!

HAH! HULK DARES TALBOT TO TRY!

THAT, MONSTER, IS PRECISELY WHAT I INTEND TO DO!

KWOM!

THIS IS YOUR MOMENT OF TRUTH, HULK!

THE MOMENT I'VE WAITED YEARS FOR!

WORDS! BAH! HULK WILL FREE HIMSELF, AND THEN--!

YOU WILL FIND *DEATH* LONG BEFORE YOU SECURE YOUR FREEDOM, HULK! I INTEND TO END YOUR LIFE!

...AS YOUR INTRUSION INTO *MY* LIFE ENDED THE DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS OF GLENN TALBOT!

"I WAS A YOUNG MAJOR WHEN GENERAL ROSS ASSIGNED ME TO KEEP WATCH OVER BRUCE BANNER, A SCIENTIST WHOSE SECRETIVENESS MADE HIM A SECURITY RISK! I WAS SURE BANNER WAS A TRAITOR!

"THUS IT GALLED ME WHEN I SAW HOW THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER, BETTY, LOVED BANNER-- EVEN AFTER IT WAS REVEALED THAT HE AND THE HULK WERE ONE AND THE SAME!

"YET, EVENTUALLY I SUCCEEDED IN MAKING BETTY **MY WIFE**-- UNTIL PURSUIT OF YOU, HULK, LED ME INTO THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNIST AGENT CALLED THE *GREMLIN*...WHERE I WAS REDUCED TO A MINDLESS HUSK!

"THE REST IS VAGUE. THEY TELL ME YOU DESTROYED THE GREMLIN--

"--AND THAT I SPENT MONTHS IN A COMA! THEN DR. LEONARD SAMSON SHRUNK YOU DOWN TO MICROSCOPIC SIZE...

"...AND PROJECTED YOU INTO THE INNERMOST REACHES OF MY MIND WHERE YOU REMOVED THE GREMLIN'S BRAIN-BLOCKAGE!

"I AWOKE...TO FIND MY MARRIAGE TO BETTY IN RUINS!

"AND IN TIME TO SEE GENERAL 'THUNDERBOLT' ROSS' HATRED OF YOU DRIVE HIM TO A NERVOUS COLLAPSE!"

FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, I SWORE VENGEANCE AGAINST YOU, HULK! AND NOW I MEAN TO CLAIM IT!

SNIK!

SLOWLY, INEXORABLY, THE GOLDEN GLEAMING BLADES DRAW CLOSER!

THEN DELICATELY, ALMOST CARESSINGLY, THE FIRST ONE TOUCHES THE GREAT EMERALD FOREHEAD...

...AND DRAWS BLOOD!

ARRGH! TALBOT TALKS ABOUT HOW HULK HURT HIM, BUT TALBOT IS THE ONE WHO MAKES THE HULK BLEED!

YOU ARE STUPID, TALBOT--FOR YOU HAVE MADE THE HULK MAD!

KRRAK!

T-THE GROUND?! YOU'RE TEARING UP THE VERY GROUND BENEATH MY FEET...

...DROPPING US BOTH DOWN INTO GAMMA BASE'S SUBTERRANEAN ULTRACLASSIFIED CHAMBERS!!

CHAMBERS? SOMEONE SPOKE THAT WORD TO THE HULK! WHO--?

TYRANNUS! THE HULK'S FOGGY MEMORY DREDGES UP AN IMAGE...

THE CRYSTAL SHOWS YOU GAMMA BASE, HULK! AND, WITHIN ITS CHAMBERS, LIES THE LAST REMAINS OF A FEMALE OF AN ALIEN RACE!

JARELLA!

JARELLA IS HERE, TALBOT, WHERE YOU AND ROSS HID HER FROM THE HULK! HULK HAS LISTENED TO YOU--HE HAS HEARD YOU BLAME HULK FOR RUINING YOUR LIFE!

G-GLLKKK!

BUT WHAT OF HULK'S LIFE? WHAT OF HULK'S LOVES??

HULK HAD FRIENDS ONCE, TALBOT! BUT YOU AND ROSS KEPT HULK FROM BETTY--AND RICK, AND JIM!

NOW, WHEN HULK JUST WANTS TO TAKE THE BODY OF HIS FRIEND HOME--BACK TO WORLD WHERE JARELLA WAS A QUEEN, TALBOT SAYS, "NO!"

HULK IS TIRED OF "NO!" TALBOT! HE IS TIRED OF PUNY, WEAK SOLDIERS WHO TRY TO KEEP HIM FROM HIS FRIENDS, EVEN WHEN HIS FRIENDS ARE DEAD!

HULK *WILL* TAKE JARELLA HOME--AND YOU, TALBOT, WILL NEVER TRY TO STOP HULK AGAIN!

OH, LORD! A-ARMOR'S BUCKLING! MY BACK! *MY BACK!!*

THAT'S ENOUGH, HULK! YOU'RE KILLING HIM! STOP IT!

STOP IT, I SAID!!

ARRHH!

SMOOSH!

YOU! HULK KNOWS YOU! YOU ARE ANOTHER ONE WHO HAS TURNED HULK'S FRIENDS AGAINST HIM!

IF YOU'RE REFERRING TO MY ASSOCIATION WITH *RICK JONES*, HULK--

--THEN YOU HAVE MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT FREEDOM OF CHOICE!

BE THAT AS IT MAY, I AM HERE TO STOP YOU FROM KILLING-- AND TO HELP YOU!

STOP? HELP? STAR-MAN IS CONFUSED! EVEN HULK KNOWS YOU CANNOT DO BOTH!

BESIDES, HULK DOES NOT WANT YOUR HELP! TALBOT HAS HIDDEN JARELLA FROM HULK, AND FOR THAT HULK WILL SMASH TALBOT!

USING THE PERCEPTIONS INHERENT IN HIS COSMIC AWARENESS, CAPTAIN MARVEL DIVINES THE POORLY EXPLAINED REASON FOR THE HULK'S RAGE...

JARELLA? A WOMAN, NOW DECEASED? YES, I UNDERSTAND! I CAN AID YOU IN YOUR QUEST FOR JARELLA, HULK--

--BUT I CANNOT ALLOW YOU TO FURTHER HARM COLONEL TALBOT!

WHO IS STAR-MAN TO "ALLOW" HULK ANYTHING?? STAY OUT OF HULK'S WAY, YELLOW-HAIR, OR HULK WILL FINISH SMASHING TALBOT--

--AND THEN SMASH YOU!!

AS FOR GLENN TALBOT, LYING BATTERED AND BEATEN INSIDE HIS GOLDEN ARMOR, HIS MIND RETREATS TO THOUGHTS OF HIS EX-WIFE, BETTY ROSS--

AND THE SUDDEN, IRRATIONAL CONVICTION THAT HE MAY HAVE LOST THE WOMAN HE LOVED--

--NOT BECAUSE OF ANY FAILURE OF FEELING ON HIS PART, BUT BECAUSE BETTY ROSS NEVER STOPPED LOVING BRUCE BANNER, THE MAN WITHIN THE HULK!

NEXT ISSUE: **THE HULK AND THE HERO**

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THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

TM

MARVEL'S TV SENSATION!

YOU BEAT THE *MANDROID*, HULK, BUT NOW YOU FACE CAPTAIN MARVEL!

THE HERO AND THE HULK!

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UNTIL A FEW MOMENTS AGO, COL. GLENN TALBOT THOUGHT HE HAD HIS GREEN NEMESIS WHERE HE WANTED HIM--HELPLESS BEFORE THE MILITARY MIGHT OF GAMMA BASE AND THE BONE-CRUSHING POWER OF HIS OWN **MANDROID** ARMOR! NOW, GAMMA BASE IS IN RUINS AND TALBOT LIES DEFEATED... A GRIM TESTIMONY TO THE RAGE OF THE INCREDIBLE HULK! THIS SITUATION PROMPTED CAPTAIN MARVEL, THE RED-AND-BLUE CLAD KREE SPACEMAN, TO TAKE A HAND IN THE MATTER!

THE HERO AND THE HULK!

I'M HERE TO HELP YOU GET WHAT YOU'RE AFTER, HULK-- BUT I WON'T LET YOU KILL A MAN TO DO IT!

BAH! TALBOT IS THE ONE WHO PUT ON ARMOR TO KILL HULK! WHY IS IT ALWAYS **HULK** WHO IS WRONG FOR FIGHTING BACK?!

HEAVEN HELP ME, IT FEELS LIKE THE HULK'S BREAKING MY BACK!

LF1

I HASTENED HERE FROM DENVER BECAUSE THE MEDIA REPORTED THAT THE HULK WAS MINDLESSLY DEVASTATING GAMMA BASE!

BUT, THROUGH THE POWER OF COSMIC AWARENESS, I HAVE TOUCHED THE HULK'S MIND WITH MY OWN!

AND I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT THERE IS A *REASON* FOR HIS RAGE!

THE MILITARY HOLDS THE LIFELESS BODY OF AN ALIEN WOMAN IN A SPECIMEN CHAMBER HERE AT GAMMA BASE! A WOMAN NAMED... JARELLA!

A WOMAN THE HULK LOVED--AND WHOSE BODY HE HAS SWORN TO BEAR BACK TO HER HOME WORLD!

HULK, LISTEN TO ME! RELEASE TALBOT, AND I'LL HELP YOU LOCATE JARELLA!

HELP THE HULK? YOU LIE, MASKED MAN! HULK IS NOT STUPID!

HULK REMEMBERS HOW YOU ONCE FOUGHT HULK! HOW YOU TURNED HULK'S FRIEND RICK AGAINST HIM!* BUT YOU WANT TALBOT... HULK WILL GIVE YOU TALBOT!

*WAY BACK IN CAPTAIN MARVEL #21. --AL.

HERE, MASKED MAN! *TAKE* TALBOT!

WASN'T EXPECTING THAT! THE MANDROID'S BEING HURLED AT ME WITH UNBELIEVABLE VELOCITY! IF I MOVE OUT OF ITS PATH, IT WILL STRIKE THE WALL BEHIND ME...

AND THE MAN INSIDE THE MANDROID ARMOR COULD NEVER SURVIVE THE IMPACT!

CAUGHT BETWEEN THE PROVERBIAL ROCK AND THE HARD PLACE, CAPTAIN MARVEL DOES WHAT HE MUST, AS SWORN PROTECTOR OF THE HUMAN RACE!

BUT THE KREE WARRIOR'S GALLANT SACRIFICE IS LOST ON AN ENRAGED HULK!

MASKED MAN CAUGHT TALBOT, BUT NOW BOTH OF THEM DON'T MOVE!

GOOD! HULK HAS SMASHED THEM--

KA-RAP!

AND NOW HULK WILL *BURY* THEM--

SHTKOOM!

SENDING OUT SHATTERING SOUNDWAVES WITH ONE THUNDEROUS CLAP, THE HULK BRINGS THE ROOF DOWN--

BURYING BOTH HIS FOES BENEATH A MINOR MOUNTAIN OF RUBBLE!

IN MOST THINGS, THE HULK'S MEMORY IS SHORT! THE OLD MAXIM "OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND", APPLIES.

AS THE DUST SETTLES ON THE UNMOVING PILE, THE HULK LOSES INTEREST IN HIS BURIED ENEMIES.

SHRUGGING, HE STALKS OFF INTO THE OMINOUS SILENCE OF GAMMA BASE, INTENT UPON HIS MISSION...

TO FIND JARELLA, AND TO TAKE HER HOME!

BUT PERHAPS THE GREAT GREEN BEHEMOTH HAS TURNED AWAY TOO SOON.

BEHIND HIM, THE FORGOTTEN WRECKAGE TREMBLES, SHIFTS--

--AND HEAVES UPWARDS AS A DAZED CAPTAIN MARVEL PULLS HIMSELF FROM THE DEBRIS!

BY PAMA! ONE CLAP OF HIS HANDS AND THE HULK NEARLY BURIED US ALIVE!

THE MANDROID'S ARMOR TOOK THE BRUNT OF THE CEILING'S COLLAPSE!

THUS, I WAS SHIELDED-- BUT WHAT OF THE HUMAN WITHIN THE ARMOR?!

TALBOT LIES UNCONSCIOUS-- OR WORSE! THE ARMOR ITSELF IS CRACKED!

HAD THE HULK'S HAMMERING NOT WEAKENED IT, I WONDER IF EVEN MY NEGA-BAND BESTOWED POWERS--

--WOULD SUFFICE TO FREE THIS HUMAN WARRIOR FROM THE ARMOR THAT HAS BECOME HIS PRISON?!

Y-YOU'RE CAPTAIN MARVEL, AREN'T YOU? THANKS. THE HULK HAD SMASHED THE MANDROID'S POWER PACK...

IF YOU HADN'T ARRIVED, HE WOULD HAVE SMASHED ME!

PERHAPS HE HAD HIS REASONS.

REASONS? WHAT POSSIBLE REASONS COULD A MINDLESS MONSTER LIKE THE HULK HAVE??

YOU HOLD, FOR PURPOSES OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTATION, THE CORPSE OF A WOMAN NAMED JARELLA, COL. TALBOT. A WOMAN THE HULK LOVED.

JARELLA? BUT SHE DIED MONTHS AGO!

YET, THE HULK REMEMBERS A PROMISE HE MADE TO HER-- TO TAKE HER HOME.

NOW HE HAS COME TO KEEP HIS PROMISE.

COL. TALBOT! WE JUST MANAGED TO GET THROUGH THE RUBBLE! ARE YOU--? HOLY COW!

CAPTAIN MARVEL!

IT APPEARS YOUR TROOPS HAVE ARRIVED, COLONEL.

WHAT WILL YOU ORDER YOUR MEN TO DO NOW? ESCALATE THE DESTRUCTION BY HAVING THEM CONTINUE TO HUNT THE HULK--?

--OR ALLOW THE HULK TO TAKE JARELLA FROM GAMMA BASE WITHOUT FURTHER FIGHTING? THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

LET THE HULK GO? MY MEN'S SAFETY IS MY PRIMARY CONSIDERATION, MARVEL...

ALL RIGHT! THE HULK CAN TAKE THE GIRL'S CORPSE! I'LL ORDER MY TROOPS NOT TO INTERFERE!

WHEN THE ALIEN INTELLIGENCE CALLED EON GAVE ME THE GIFT OF COSMIC AWARENESS, I DOUBT IF HE EXPECTED IT TO FUNCTION AS A SIMPLE LIE-DETECTOR!

YET GLENN TALBOT *IS* LYING!

HE FULLY PLANS TO DESTROY THE HULK, AND HE'S ONLY TELLING ME OTHERWISE IN THE HOPES THAT I'LL LEAVE!

I THANK YOU AGAIN FOR SAVING MY LIFE, CAPTAIN MARVEL, BUT THERE'S REALLY NO REASON FOR YOU TO REMAIN AT GAMMA BASE!

YOU'RE CERTAIN OF THAT, COLONEL?

OF COURSE! THE HULK ONLY BECAME DESTRUCTIVE BECAUSE I STOOD IN HIS WAY! BUT NOW THAT I KNOW WHAT HE'S AFTER...

YOU PLAN ON FINISHING WHAT YOU STARTED-- THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE HULK!

THEN I GUESS I'M NO LONGER NEEDED, COLONEL!

I'LL PLAY ALONG-- LET TALBOT THINK I'VE DEPARTED-- AND THEN TRY TO REACH THE HULK BEFORE HE DOES!

AT LAST-- THAT SELF-RIGHTEOUS SPACEMAN'S GONE! ASSEMBLE THE HULKBUSTER ASSULT UNITS, CAPTAIN! WE'LL PROCEED AS PLANNED!

BUT, COLONEL-- YOU TOLD CAPTAIN MARVEL--?!

WHO DO YOU TAKE ORDERS FROM, SOLDIER?! ME--OR SOME INTERFERING ALIEN?? NOW, DO AS I SAY! WE'RE HUNTING THE HULK!

OBLIVIOUS TO HIS PLANNED DESTRUCTION, THE HULK STRIDES SILENT CORRIDORS.

HE HAS TRODDEN THIS ULTRA-MODERN LABYRINTH BEFORE, IN HAPPIER TIMES...

AS BRUCE BANNER, THE MAN, WALKING BESIDE HIS BE-LOVED JARELLA, A QUEEN FROM A SUB-MICROSCOPIC REALM.

NOW, THE MAN IS GONE, BURIED WITHIN THE MONSTER THAT IS THE AWESOME, INCREDI-BLE HULK.

AND THE ALIEN EMPRESS OF A WORLD-WITHIN-OUR-WORLD LIES COLD AND LIFELESS IN THIS CHAMBER...

CRYOGENICS MORGUE

THE HULK CANNOT READ THE LEGEND ON THE DOOR.

YET HE KNOWS, DREDGING THE MEMORY FROM THE DIM RECESSES OF HIS MIND, THAT HE WILL FIND THE ONE HE SEEKS-- WITHIN.

AND NO MAN-MADE BARRIER OF REIN-FORCED TITANIUM STEEL CAN LONG KEEP THE BEREAVED BEHEMOTH FROM HIS BELOVED--

JARELLA!

SHKROOM!

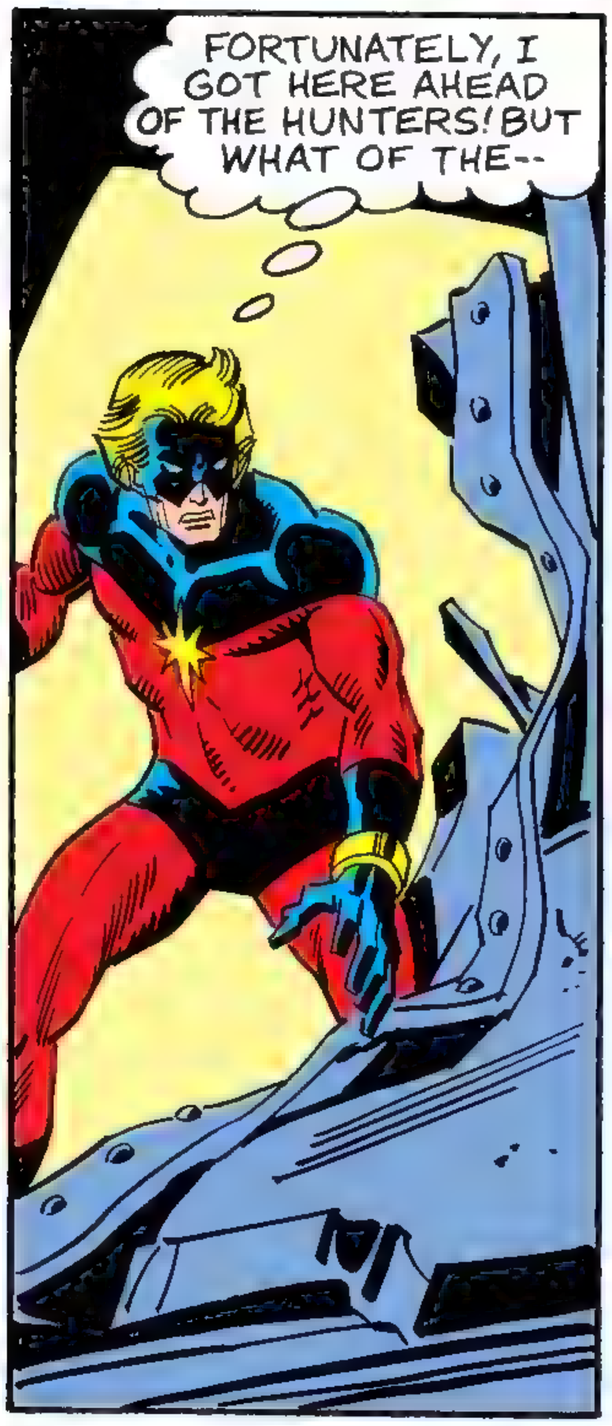
HULK HAS COME FOR YOU. HULK IS HERE.

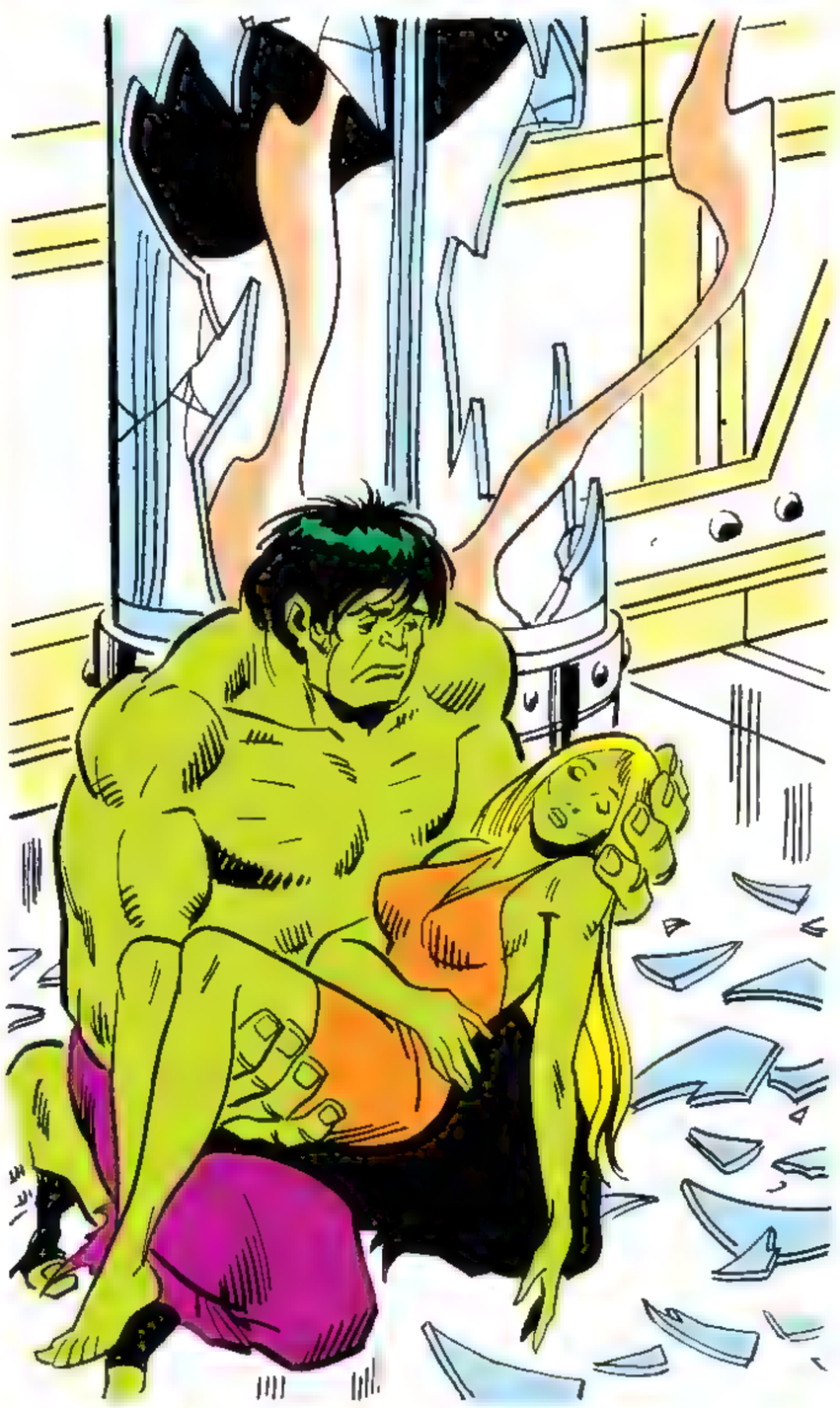
THERE IS NO RE-SPONSE FROM WITHIN THE CHAMBER...

HULK WILL KEEP HIS PROMISE.

THERE IS ONLY SILENCE!
THE SILENCE OF THE DEAD.

MEANWHILE, SOARING THROUGH THE TUNNELS IN SEARCH OF THE HULK...
ONE NEEDN'T POSSESS COSMIC AWARENESS TO FIND THE HULK!
NOR WILL TALBOT AND HIS TROOPS NEED A ROAD MAP, SINCE ALL THEY NEED DO IS FOLLOW THE PATH OF WANTON DESTRUCTION LEFT IN HIS WAKE!


FORTUNATELY, I GOT HERE AHEAD OF THE HUNTERS! BUT WHAT OF THE--



--HULK??
DIS-SOLVE TO:

A SECLUDED HUNTING CABIN SITUATED ON THE FOOTHILLS OF THE MAJESTIC COLORADO ROCKIES...

WHERE SITS A TIRED OLD MAN, HIS FACE DRAWN AND CARE-WORN...

AN OLD CAMPAIGNER, PAST HIS PRIME, WHOM THE MARTIAL MUSIC HAS SINCE PASSED BY.

GENERAL ROSS, I'VE BROUGHT YOU YOUR BREAKFAST.

THE YOUNGER MAN MIGHT BE HIS SON... EXCEPT FOR THE SHOULDER-LENGTH GREEN HAIR!

STILL, DOC LEONARD SAMSON'S CONCERN FOR THE OLD MAN IS AS GREAT AS IF GENERAL "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS WERE HIS FATHER-- RATHER THAN HIS PATIENT!

NOT HUNGRY? WELL, I'LL JUST SET IT DOWN BESIDE YOU.

LEONARD SAMSON IS A WORLD-REKNOWNED PSYCHIATRIST.

ARE YOU COMFORTABLE OUT HERE, GENERAL? HOW ABOUT A GAME OF CHESS?

HE NUMBERS AMONG HIS GREATEST TRIUMPHS, THE FACT THAT HE ONCE ANALYZED THE PSYCHE OF THE MAN-MONSTER CALLED THE HULK!

HERE, GENERAL. CHOOSE YOUR COLOR.

NOW DOC SAMSON ATTEMPTS TO REACH AN OLD SOLDIER DRIVEN TO A NERVOUS BREAK-DOWN BY THAT SELFSAME HULK!

JUST THEN...

EH?

...RUMORED THAT THE HULK HAS DEVASTATED GAMMA BASE...

THE RADIO BROADCAST JARS GENERAL ROSS--

--REMINDING HIM OF THE BEING HE HAS TRIED SO HARD TO FORGET!

NNNNNN--

--NO!!

GENERAL!

SKRAK!

BLASTED RADIO--I COULDN'T TURN IT OFF IN TIME! THE MERE MENTION OF THE HULK HAS DISTURBED THE GENERAL'S DELICATELY BALANCED PSYCHE, RUINING ALL MY WEEKS OF THERAPY!

DAMNED MURDERING MONSTER!

EASY, GENERAL!

IF ONLY HE COULD ACCEPT REALITY--THAT THE HULK IS AS TORTURED AND TORMENTED AS HE IS!

DOC SAMSON'S EXPOSURE TO GAMMA RAYS MERELY GAVE HIM SUPER-STRENGTH, NOT THE GIFT OF PRE-SCIENCE, ELSE HE WOULD KNOW THAT, AT THIS MOMENT--

THE MONSTER MEN CALL HULK IS EVEN MORE AWASH IN GRIEF THAN SAMSON'S CURRENT CHARGE!

JARELLA DOESN'T MOVE. DOESN'T BREATHE.

IT IS TRUE THEN, WHAT HULK REMEMBERED. JARELLA IS... DEAD.

FROM THE TURMOIL OF HIS MEMORIES, THE HULK DREDGES UP THE RECOLLECTION OF HIS FALL THROUGH SUBMICROSCOPIC SPACE...

THEN, HE SMILES, THIS MONSTER, WHO HAS FOUND LITTLE IN LIFE TO BE HAPPY ABOUT!

THE HULK HAS KNOWN HIS TIME OF JOY-- A BRIEF INTERLUDE SPENT AS THE WARRIOR-PRINCE OF A MOLECULAR WORLD, REIGNING BESIDE HIS RADIANT QUEEN! HER NAME WAS JARELLA, AND GREAT WAS THEIR LOVE!

BUT THE HULK HAD TO RETURN TO EARTH...

AND, THOUGH JARELLA SOON FOLLOWED, IN HER WAKE CAME A KILLER FROM HER OWN WORLD! **FIALAN,** THE MASTER ASSASSIN!

THE HULK SHIELDED JARELLA FROM THAT DANGER!

AND SOON HE VOYAGED AGAIN TO JARELLA'S WORLD--

-- TO SAVE HIS PRINCESS AND HER PLANET FROM THE RAPACIOUS RAVAGES OF THE SINISTER PSYKLOP!

BUT, IN THE END, IT WAS ALL FOR NOTHING! ALL IN VAIN!

FOR JARELLA DIED, AWAY FROM HER PEOPLE, AWAY FROM HER WORLD--DIED SAVING A CHILD OF EARTH FROM BEING CRUSHED BENEATH A WALL OF CRUMBLING MASONRY!

THIS, THE HULK REMEMBERS!

THIS, HE CAN NEVER FORGET!

JARELLA IS DEAD! EARTH KILLED HER WHEN ALL SHE WANTED WAS TO GO BACK HOME!

I SENSE HIS GRIEF IS REAL. AND NOW THE TRAGIC MONSTER... CRIES!

HULK IS SORRY JARELLA-- SORRY YOU CAME TO EARTH BECAUSE YOU LOVED THE HULK!

HULK CAN NOT MAKE YOU LIVE AGAIN! ALL HULK CAN DO IS TAKE YOU FROM EARTH, BACK TO YOUR WORLD! HOME!

HULK, IF YOU'LL LET ME, I'D LIKE TO--

YE-E-P!

HE--

EVEN HIS MOMENT WITH JARELLA YOU WOULD STEAL FROM HULK, SPACEMAN? EVEN THAT??

KRONK!

BY ALL THE GODS OF THE KREE--! THAT BLOW COULD HAVE KILLED ME!

I WAS MISTAKEN TO INTRUDE UPON THE HULK'S GRIEF...

A FAIRLY SOUND APPRAISAL, MAR-VELL!

KASTROOM!

MANAGED TO AVOID HIS CHARGE...BUT JUST BARELY!

BY THE GREAT PAMA! THE HULK'S LEAP CARRIED HIM THROUGH THE VERY FLOOR, INTO THE BEDROCK BELOW GAMMA BASE ITSELF!

I MUST SEE WHETHER HE'S ALL--

--RIGHT!

WHILE MASKED MAN LOOKED FOR HULK OVER THERE--

--HULK HAS COME UP *HERE!* NOW HULK HAS MASKED MAN WHERE HE WANTS HIM!

AND NOTHING WILL STOP HULK FROM...

SMASHING ME, HULK? NO, I DON'T THINK SO.

I UNDERSTAND YOUR DISTRUST OF WORDS-- MEN CAN USE THEM TO SAY SO MANY THINGS OTHER THAN WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN! BUT I HAVE A WAY OF COMMUNICATING BEYOND MERE WORDS, HULK!

AND, ONCE OUR MINDS HAVE MERGED ON A COSMIC PLANE, WHERE TRUTH IS SIMPLY ANOTHER ASPECT OF AWARENESS...

PERHAPS THEN YOU WILL BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY THAT I MEAN YOU NO HARM-- THAT I MERELY WISH TO HELP YOU.

HELP? BUT WHY DOES SPACEMAN WANT TO HELP HULK?

PERHAPS, HULK, BECAUSE I, TOO, ONCE LOST A LOVE.

NO MORE WORDS! HULK BELIEVES YOU, MASKED MAN! HE WILL LET YOU HELP!

AND HULK NEEDS YOUR HELP, BECAUSE HE HAS PROMISED TO TAKE JARELLA HOME! BUT HULK DOES NOT KNOW WHERE JARELLA'S WORLD IS, OR HOW TO GET THERE!

YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, BUT YOU JOURNEYED THERE ONCE BEFORE FROM GAMMA BASE, HULK.

BRING JARELLA. IT'S THIS WAY...

UNQUESTIONINGLY, THE JADE GIANT FOLLOWS THE KREE WARRIOR...

WHILE, ELSEWHERE IN GAMMA BASE...

THE BETA-BORER'S FULLY CHARGED COL. TALBOT! ALL HULKBUSTER UNITS ARE READY!

GOOD! BY NOW THE HULK'S RETRIEVED JARELLA'S BODY!

UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, HIS NEXT STOP WILL BE THE SUBMOLECULAR STUDIES CHAMBER!

WILL THIS THING REALLY STOP THAT GREEN GOLIATH?

IT SHOULD! IT WAS DESIGNED TO PUNCH HOLES THROUGH ASTEROIDS!

YEAH BUT THE HULK'S **NOT** AN ASTEROID!

OUR PLAYERS NOW CONVERGE FROM OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS ON...

GAMMA BASE'S SUBMOLECULAR STUDIES LAB. I REMEMBER HEARING THAT IT WAS DE-SIGNED BY REED RICHARDS.

BAH! MACHINES ARE ALWAYS MADE TO HURT HULK!

IT'S AMAZING HOW LIGHT THE BETA-BORER IS, SIR!

TONY STARK BUILT IT FOR ONE-MAN MINING IN SPACE, SOLDIER! HE NEVER DREAMED I'D CONVERT IT INTO A WEAPON!

THIS MACHINE WAS MADE TO HELP, HULK, BY SHRINKING MEN OR OBJECTS DOWN TO SUBMICROSCOPIC SIZE.

IT ONCE SHRUNK YOU, ENABLING YOU TO ENTER THE BRAIN OF GLENN TALBOT AND BRING HIM OUT OF A COMA.

THE HULK'S IN THE LAB, SIR--WITH CAPTAIN MARVEL AND THE DEAD GIRL!

SO, MARVEL LIED ABOUT LEAVING GAMMA BASE?! WELL TOO BAD THEN... FOR HIM!

MOVE THE BETA-BORER INTO POSITION!

IT TAKES BUT A MOMENT TO DECIPHER THE CONTROLS OF THE MICRON-CANNON. THERE, IT IS DONE.

THEN WHY IS HULK STILL HERE, MASKED MAN?

WHY HASN'T CANNON SHOT HULK AND JARELLA AWAY?

BECAUSE I HAVE ONLY DETERMINED THE COORDINATES OF YOUR JOURNEY, HULK. ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO CHARGE THE MACHINERY.

A BRACE OF PHOTON BURSTS SHOULD DO IT.

PREPARE YOURSELF, HULK. AND WHATEVER HAPPENS, DO NOT MOVE FROM THE TRANSPORT PLATFORM!

HULK IS READY!

THE MICRO-CANNON HUMS TO LIFE...

MUTING THE SOUND OF THE BETA-BORER AS IT, TOO, CRACKLES WITH PENT-UP ENERGY!

READY WITH THE BETA-BORER, SOLDIER?

READY, COLONEL TALBOT!

THEN, ON MY COMMAND: GET READY... TAKE AIM...

THEN, BEFORE THE FATEFUL COMMAND CAN BE GIVEN...

ZRMM

THE MICRON-CANNON ACTIVATES, BATHING THE HULK AND HIS BURDEN IN A WHIRLPOOL OF UNBRIDLED ENERGIES...

REDUCING THE HULK AND JARELLA TO SUB-MOLECULAR SIZE--

--AND FIRING THEM INTO THE VOID!

YET, THEY DO NOT VOYAGE AIMLESSLY! THEIR COURSE HAS BEEN PLOTTED FOR THEM BY ONE WHO HAS TRAVERSED THE COSMOS!

CAPTAIN MARVEL HAS SENT THEM TO JARELLA'S WORLD!

AND COLONEL GLENN TALBOT OF EARTH IS DETERMINED THAT THEY WILL NEVER RETURN!

FIRE!

BY THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF EON--!?

SHKROW!

THE MICRON-CANNON IS DESTROYED!

YOU DID THIS, HUMAN! IN YOUR UNBOUNDED HATRED--

--YOU HAVE FOREVER EXILED THE HULK FROM EARTH!

THAT'S RIGHT, ALIEN! AT LAST I'M RID OF HIM! THE HULK COST ME MY MARRIAGE, ROBBED ME OF THE LOVE OF BETTY ROSS! NOW LET HIM DRIFT FOR ALL ETERNITY IN SUBSPACE--

IN THE EMBRACE OF HIS DEAR, ***DEAD*** JARELLA!

NEXT ISSUE

HOME IS NEVER THE WAY WE REMEMBER IT!

JARELLA'S WORLD!

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THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

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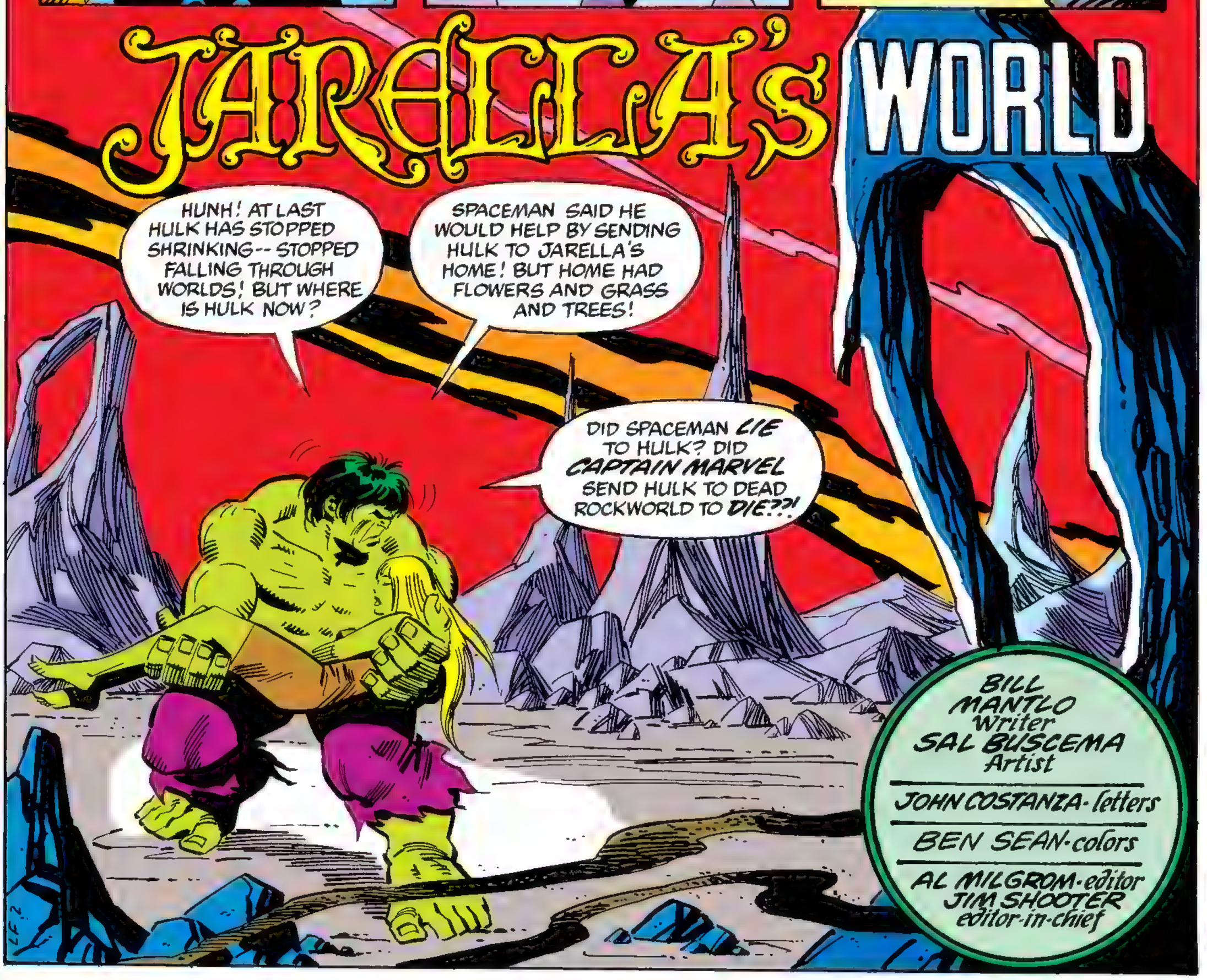
--BEARING IN HIS ARMS THE CORPSE OF JARELLA, AN ALIEN PRINCESS WHOM THE HULK ONCE LOVED...
HE IS NOW RETURNING HER BODY TO HER HOME!

JARELLA'S WORLD


HUNH! AT LAST HULK HAS STOPPED SHRINKING-- STOPPED FALLING THROUGH WORLDS! BUT WHERE IS HULK NOW?
SPACEMAN SAID HE WOULD HELP BY SENDING HULK TO JARELLA'S HOME! BUT HOME HAD FLOWERS AND GRASS AND TREES!
DID SPACEMAN LIE TO HULK? DID CAPTAIN MARVEL SEND HULK TO DEAD ROCKWORLD TO DIE??!
BILL MANTLO Writer
SAL BUSCEMA Artist
JOHN COSTANZA-letters
BEN SEAN-colors
AL MILGROM-editor
JIM SHOOTER editor-in-chief

NO! SOMEHOW HULK KNOWS CAPTAIN MARVEL DID NOT LIE!

THIS IS JARELLA'S WORLD-- BUT IT IS DIFFERENT! HULK REMEMBERS BIRDS AND BUGS... AND PEOPLE!

BUT NOW, EVERYTHING IS BLACK ROCKS, BLACK DUST! EVERYTHING IS COLD AND DEAD--

--LIKE JARELLA!

BUT WHY HAS JARELLA'S WORLD CHANGED? HULK LIKED IT THE WAY IT WAS!

JARELLA'S PEOPLE LOVED THE HULK BECAUSE HULK LOVED JARELLA! THEY WANTED THE HULK TO BE THEIR KING ONCE!

HULK WAS HAPPY HERE! HAPPY! HULK NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE... NEVER WANTED TO GO BACK TO EARTH!

BUT EARTH ALWAYS MADE HULK COME BACK! WHY? WHY DID EARTH WANT HULK BACK, WHEN ALL EARTH DID WAS TRY TO KILL HULK--

-- THE WAY EARTH KILLED JARELLA!

EH?!

HULK HEARS... SCREAMS!

AND SCREAMS MEAN PEOPLE! PEOPLE IN TROUBLE!

JARELLA'S PEOPLE!!

BUMBERING ONTO THE CLIFFSIDE, HIS PRECIOUS BURDEN CAREFULLY CRADLED IN HIS ARMS, THE GREEN GOLIATH PEERS OVER THE PERILOUS PRECIPICE...

IF THE HULK HAD ANY LINGERING DOUBTS AS TO HIS WHEREABOUTS IN THE VAST VOID OF THIS SUB-ATOMIC MICRO-VERSE, THEY ARE INSTANTLY DISPELLED! THE HUMANS BELOW, THOUGH CAKED WITH DIRT AND GARBED IN FOUL-SMELLING FURS, POSSESS THE SAME EMERALD PIGMENTATION AS THE HULK AND HIS BELOVED PRINCESS!

THEY ARE JARELLA'S PEOPLE... AND THEY ARE IN DESPERATE DANGER!

MWOAR!

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#22!

THE TERROR OF THE GREEN-SKINNED HUMANS, THOUGH VOICED IN AN ALIEN TONGUE, IS CLEAR TO THE MAN-MONSTER WATCHING ABOVE!

BAT-DRAGON TRIES TO EAT JARELLA'S PEOPLE!

BUT HULK ONCE PROMISED JARELLA THAT HE WOULD BE PR...PRO...PROTECTOR OF JARELLA'S WORLD!

LIE HERE AND WAIT FOR HULK, JARELLA! DO NOT WORRY, HULK WILL COME BACK--

--AFTER HULK HAS KEPT HIS PROMISE!

WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION, THE JADE GIANT HURLS HIMSELF OVER THE CLIFF...

... FULL ONTO THE SLAVERING SERPENT...

IT IS NOT HELPLESS HUMANS YOU FACE NOW, BAT-DRAGON!

IT IS THE HULK!

AND HULK IS PR...PRO... PROTECTOR OF THESE PEOPLE WITH GREEN SKIN LIKE HULK'S!

SO LET HULK'S PEOPLE GO!!

IT IS THE KIND OF BATTLE FROM WHICH MYTHS ARE WOVEN!

IF THERE ARE STORYTELLERS AMONGST THE WATCHERS BELOW, THEY ARE ALREADY EMBROIDERING THE TALE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN!

TELLING OF A DAY WHEN THE LONG-LOST **CHAMPION** OF K'AI DROPPED OUT OF THE SKY--

--TO DEAL DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO THE OUTLAND DEMONS THAT PLAGUED THE PEOPLE DURING THE DAYS OF DARKNESS.

DIE, BAT-DRAGON! HULK HAS FOUGHT BIGGER ENEMIES THAN YOU!

THROOM

AND HULK ALWAYS WINS!

BECAUSE HULK IS THE *STRONGEST* ONE THERE IS!

WITH THE DRAGON'S DEMISE, THE EMERALD-HUED INHABITANTS OF K'AI SWARM EN MASSE FROM THEIR CAVERNS OF CONCEALMENT--

@!:#!$!

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#@'#!

--SONGS OF PRAISE SPRINGING SPONTANEOUSLY TO THEIR LIPS!

BUT THE HULK NEITHER UNDERSTANDS, NOR DESIRES, THEIR ADORATION!

BACK!

#:66?

FOR, IN HIS MONSTER'S SOUL, THE HULK KNOWS WHAT THEY CANNOT KNOW!

THAT HIS RETURN TO K'AI WILL NOT SIGNAL A TIME OF CELEBRATION--

--BUT WILL MERELY SIGNAL THE BEGINNING OF A PAINFUL PERIOD OF RENEWED GRIEF!

SING A SONG! HULK'S RETURN WILL NOT MAKE YOU HAPPY!

HULK HAS BROUGHT JARELLA HOME, AS HE PROMISED--BUT JARELLA IS...DEAD!

JXELLX!

JXELLX!

JXELLX?

AND, DRAWN FROM THE CAVE'S DEPTHS BY THE DIRGEFUL DIN, THREE ELDERS STEP OUT INTO THE HALF-LIGHT!

THEY COMPRISE THE **PANTHEON OF SORCERORS**--AND ARE CALLED **HOLI, MOLI** AND **TORLA!**

RECOGNIZING AT ONCE THE BRUTE THAT BEARS THE BODY OF THEIR QUEEN, THEY WEAVE A SUBTLE SPELL...

THEY POSSESS LESS POWER THAN THEY WIELDED OF OLD--

--AND YET, 'TIS ENOUGH...'TWILL SUFFICE!

HULK KNOWS YOU! YOU ARE JARELLA'S MAGICIANS!

AND YOU HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO HULK TO MAKE HIM UNDERSTAND YOUR WORDS!

IN TIMES PAST, REINFORCED BY THE TRANSCENDANT TECHNOLOGY OF K'AI, OUR SPELLS COULD HAVE DONE FAR MORE THAN MERELY BRIDGE THE LANGUAGE BARRIER THAT KEPT US FROM COMMUNICATING, FRIEND HULK!

THEN WE WERE ABLE TO ALLOW THE MIND OF **BRUCE BANNER** TO DOMINATE THE BODY OF THE **HULK!**

BANNER? HULK **HATES** BANNER! IF MAGICIAN WANTS TO BE HULK'S FRIEND HE WILL NEVER MENTION PUNY BANNER AGAIN!

IT IS HULK WHO HAS RETURNED TO YOU--

--AND HULK WHO HAS BROUGHT JARELLA HOME!

DEAD--AS WE HAVE LONG SUSPECTED AND LONG FEARED! THANK YOU FOR RETURNING JARELLA TO HER PEOPLE, HULK!

A DEAD QUEEN COME HOME TO A DYING WORLD!

BUT WHY IS JARELLA'S WORLD DYING? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CITIES? WHY DO JARELLA'S PEOPLE LIVE IN CAVES AND NEVER SMILE?

THERE IS LITTLE LEFT TO SMILE ABOUT, HULK! OUR WAY OF LIFE CHANGED--

"--ON THE VERY DAY THAT YOU RESCUED OUR WORLD FROM THE RAVAGES OF THAT MILLENIA-OLD MADMAN... **PSYKLOP!**

"DO YOU REMEMBER, HULK, HOW ALL K'AI TURNED OUT TO PRAISE YOU? AND TO HEAR OUR QUEEN'S PROCLAMATION?

THE DANGER IS PAST! LET THIS BE A DAY FOR CELEBRATION--

--FOR IF THE HULK WILL HAVE ME, I WOULD BE HIS BRIDE!

"BUT, EVEN AS THE ROYAL PALACE RESOUNDED WITH REJOICING--!"

F-FEEL SO STRANGE SUDDENLY! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO US?

WE ARE GROWING BIGGER, JARELLA!

TURNING INTO **GIANTS!!**

"AND THAT, HULK, IS THE LAST WE OF K'AI EVER SAW OF YOU OR OUR BELOVED QUEEN JARELLA!

DO NOT BE AFRAID, JARELLA! HULK WILL PROTECT YOU!

I COULD NEVER BE FRIGHTENED, BELOVED-- SO LONG AS I'M WITH YOU!

"WHERE DID YOU GO, HULK? DID YOU TAKE OUR QUEEN BACK TO YOUR WORLD, THUS SPARING HER THE SIGHT OF K'AI'S FINAL DESTRUCTION--

"AS MIGHTY EARTHQUAKES TOPPLED OUR REMAINING CITIES INTO THE DUST?"

THE MAGE TORLA GROWS SILENT! HE KNOWS THE HULK CANNOT COMPREHEND HIS QUESTIONS, LET ALONE GIVE ANSWER.

FOR THE HULK BARELY REMEMBERS GROWING EVER LARGER, JARELLA IN HIS ARMS--

--AS THEY LEFT THE MICROVERSE BEHIND THEM...

G-GENERAL ROSS? SOMETHING'S MATERIALIZING ON THE MICROSCOPE SLIDE!

IT'S THE HULK, SAMSON! YOU'VE PULLED HIM BACK FROM THE MICROVERSE!

YES, SIR! BUT I HAVEN'T BROUGHT HIM BACK ALONE!

YES, THE HULK RETURNED TO EARTH WITH HIS BRIDE-TO-BE, BUT JARELLA WAS WISE ENOUGH TO KNOW SHE WAS SOMEWHERE SHE DID NOT BELONG!

I MUST RETURN TO K'AI, HULK--TO HELP REBUILD MY WORLD!

AND I MUST RETURN ALONE!

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT WASN'T THE WAY THINGS WORKED OUT!

I'M AFRAID JARELLA'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE! YOU SEE--

--IN HIS ANGER, THE HULK SHATTERED THE SLIDE CONTAINING HER SUBATOMIC WORLD!

HULD DID NOT MEAN TO DO IT! HULK WAS ANGRY THAT ROSS AND SAMSON BROUGHT HULK HOME!

HULK IS SORRY HE BROKE SLIDE!

THE SHATTERING OF THAT SLIDE SENT OUR WORLD OF K'AI SPINNING THROUGH SUB-ATOMIC CREATING MASSIVE GEOLOGICAL UPHEAVALS!

"AND, WHEN THE TREMORS ENDED, I'M AFRAID THERE WASN'T MUCH LEFT OF US, OR OUR AGE-OLD CIVILIZATION!

"BUT WE PICKED OURSELVES UP FROM THE RUINS--

"--AND, CARRYING WITH US WHATEVER KNOWLEDGE OF OUR FORMER GLORY WE COULD BEAR IN OUR MINDS...

"WE SET OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS... TO BEGIN ANEW!"

BUT IT WAS NOT EASY, HULK! OUR NEW POSITION IN SPACE IS FAR FROM ANY SUN! FEW PLANTS GROW, AND THOSE ANIMALS WHICH SURVIVED FEED MOSTLY UPON OUR OWN KIND!

HULK SWORE TO PROTECT JARELLA AND JARELLA'S WORLD! SHE WANTED TO COME BACK--TO REBUILD! NOW HULK IS HERE TO CARRY OUT JARELLA'S LAST WISH!

YOU WILL AID US, HULK? WITH YOUR MIGHTY STRENGTH, PERHAPS WE CAN REBUILD K'AI TO ITS FORMER GLORY! BUT FIRST, A MORE SOMBER TASK AWAITS US! JARELLA MUST BE BURIED ALONGSIDE HER ANCESTORS! THERE... IN THE *VALLEY OF LIFE!*

A COLD WIND HOWLS, AND NIGHT FALLS ON JARELLA'S WORLD!

MORNING IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES, AS DR. LEONARD SAMSON ATTEMPTS A NEW FORM OF THERAPY ON HIS PATIENT, GENERAL "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS!

IT'S A GREAT DAY FOR HUNTING, GENERAL!

AND MAYBE A BRISK WALK IN THE WOODS WILL GET YOUR MIND OFF THE CAUSE OF YOUR NERVOUS COLLAPSE--YOUR FAILURE TO END THE MENACE OF THE HULK!

READY, GENERAL?

THE OLD SOLDIER MAKES NO AUDIBLE REPLY--

--BUT ALLOWS HIMSELF TO BE LED LIKE A CHILD BY THE GREEN-HAIRED PSYCHIATRIST!

THEIR BREATH MISTS IN THE CHILL MOUNTAIN AIR...

AND, BEFORE LONG, THE DEEP, SILENT FOREST HIDES THEM FROM VIEW!

THE NEW MEXICO SUN BEATS DOWN MERCILESSLY ON THE TWISTED WRECKAGE OF WHAT ONLY YESTERDAY WAS THE THEORETICALLY INVINCIBLE MILITARY INSTALLATION KNOWN AS **GAMMA BASE!**

TODAY, SHATTERED WEAPONS LIE SCATTERED LIKE SUN-BLEACHED BONES ABOUT THE DESERT FLOOR!

FOR ALL ITS FIREPOWER, GAMMA BASE COULD NOT FULFILL THE SOLE PURPOSE FOR WHICH IT WAS BUILT... THE COMPLETE AND UTTER ANNIHILATION OF THE MAN-MONSTER KNOWN AS **THE INCREDIBLE HULK!**

AND THAT IS A FACT THAT THE PRESENT COMMANDER, COL. GLENN TALBOT, CANNOT TOLERATE!

MAKE ONE MOVE, CAPTAIN MARVEL, AND YOU'RE A DEAD MAN!

YOU HELPED THE HULK, AND YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THAT!

LIKE YOU'VE MADE EVERYONE--INCLUDING YOUR WIFE--PAY FOR NOT SHARING YOUR OBSESSIVE HATRED OF THE HULK, GLENN?

WHO--??

HAS IT BEEN SO LONG SINCE WE CEASED TO BE MAN AND WIFE, GLENN, THAT YOU'VE EVEN FORGOTTEN MY VOICE?

BETTY! HOW DID YOU GET HERE? THE BASE HAS BEEN UNDER A COMPLETE SECURITY SEAL SINCE WORD CAME OF THE HULKS IMPENDING ATTACK!

YOU MEAN GAMMA BASE'S ATTACK ON THE HULK, DON'T YOU, COLONEL TALBOT?

THE HULK ONLY FOUGHT YOU BECAUSE YOU TRIED TO KEEP HIM FROM THE BODY OF HIS BELOVED JARELLA!

I-I THOUGHT SOMETHING LIKE THAT MUST BE THE TRUTH, CAPTAIN MARVEL, SO I FLEW RICK JONES, FRED SLOAN, YOUR GIRLFRIEND ELYSIUS AND MYSELF DOWN IN MY PRIVATE PLANE--

--HOPING TO GET HERE BEFORE MY EX-HUSBAND IRRATIONALLY DESTROYED A POOR CREATURE WHO MEANS NO HARM!

YOU STILL DEFEND THAT BRAINLESS BRUTE OVER ME, BETTY?

WHY DON'T YOU ADMIT YOU NEVER STOPPED LOVING BRUCE BANNER--THE MAN TRAPPED INSIDE THE HULK!

I WON'T EVEN DIGNIFY THAT WITH AN ANSWER, GLENN!

CAPTAIN MARVEL, WHAT OF THE HULK? IS--IS HE...?

DEAD, MS. ROSS? THOUGH I POSSESS THE GIFT OF COSMIC AWARENESS--

"--EVEN I CANNOT SAY WHAT BECAME OF THE HULK AFTER HE STEPPED UPON THE LAUNCHING PLATFORM OF GAMMA BASE'S MICRON-CANNON...

"FOR, HE HAD BARELY SHRUNK FROM SIGHT, WHEN TALBOT BURST IN AND ORDERED THE MICRON-CANNON DESTROYED!"

I HAD PINPOINTED THE LOCATION OF JARELLA'S WORLD, K'AI! THE HULK MAY HAVE ARRIVED THERE SAFELY...

OR HE MAY BE DEAD, OR LOST FOREVER IN SUB-SPACE!

OH, WOW! NOW I'VE GOT AN ENDING FOR MY BOOK ABOUT THE HULK--AN ENDING I DIDN'T WANT!

I HOPE YOU'RE REAL PROUD OF YOURSELF, TALBOT! IT COST YOU GAMMA BASE, BUT YOU DOOMED THE HULK!

I-I DID MY DUTY!

YEAH, BUT YOU LOST YOUR HUMANITY!

WHILE ON A FAR-FLUNG WORLD!

MREE MREE

WHY DO JARELLA'S PEOPLE SING, MAGICIAN?

TO TELL DEATH THEY BRING HIM THEIR QUEEN, HULK!

AND BECAUSE THEIR KING HAS RETURNED TO LEAD THEM FROM THE DEAD LANDS TO THE VALLEY OF LIFE!

IF JARELLA'S WORLD IS DEAD, HOW DO JARELLA'S PEOPLE EAT?

FOOD WE SCAVENGE FROM OUR SHATTERED CITIES, FOR NOTHING GROWS--

-- SAVE THERE, IN THE ONE CORNER OF K'AI STILL FERTILE! GAZE, O' HULK, ON THE SACRED VALLEY OF LIFE!

LOOK THE HULK DOES, LONG AND HARD, AT THE TREES SWAYING IN A SOFTLY SIGHING BREEZE!

FROM AFAR, THE SCENT OF FLOWERS REACHES THE HULK'S FLARING NOSTRILS!

AND THE DISTANT SOUNDS OF WILD BIRDS AND CLEAR-FLOWING STREAMS CARESS HIS EARS. EARS WHICH HAVE HEARD NOTHING BUT THE HOWLING WINDS OF BLACK DUST SINCE HIS RETURN TO JARELLA'S WORLD!

HUNH! VALLEY OF LIFE IS GOOD PLACE! HULK WILL BURY JARELLA THERE! AND THERE JARELLA'S PEOPLE WILL BUILD NEW HOMES TO LIVE!

B-BUT, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, HULK! THE VALLEY OF LIFE IS FORBIDDEN TO THE PEOPLE OF K'AI!

WE MAY BURY OUR DEAD THERE, 'TIS TRUE! BUT TO THE LIVING --

--THE DELIGHTS OF THE VALLEY OF LIFE ARE ETERNALLY DENIED! YONDER HANG THE BONES OF THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO DWELL THERE!

NONE HAVE DARED PASS INTO ITS FORESTS SINCE!

WE MUST LEAVE JARELLA'S BIER HERE AND DEPART! THE VALLEY DEMONS WILL COME AND CLAIM HER FOR BURIAL!

LEAVE JARELLA HERE, WHERE IT IS COLD AND DARK?

WALK BACK TO ROCKWORLD WHEN THERE IS FOOD IN VALLEY FOR ALL?

NO! HULK WILL TAKE JARELLA INTO GREEN WOODS AND LAY HER TO REST-- THEN HULK WILL GET FOOD FOR JARELLA'S PEOPLE!

B-BUT THE VALLEY WILL NOT TOLERATE YOUR LIVING PRESENCE!

THE VALLEY DEMONS WILL REND YOU!

DO NOT GO, O'KING!

JARELLA MUST BE BURIED, AND JARELLA'S PEOPLE MUST HAVE FOOD! NO DEMONS WILL STOP HULK!

IF THEY TRY, HULK WILL SMASH!

WAIT HERE! HULK WILL BE BACK!

BEHIND THE HULK, THE GENTLE FOLK OF K'AI SEND UP A KEENING WAIL, FOR TO THEM IT SEEMS THIS DAY HAS LOST THEM A BELOVED QUEEN... AND A MIGHTY KING!

YET, THEY SETTLE DOWN TO WAIT, FOR SUCH WAS THEIR KING'S LAST COMMAND!

VALLEY IS PRETTY-- LIKE JARELLA'S WORLD USED TO BE!

EVERYTHING ALWAYS CHANGES! EVERYTHING EXCEPT HULK!

YET, WORLD IS DIFFERENT! JARELLA IS DEAD! EVERYTHING HAS CHANGED!

HULK IS ALWAYS HULK-- ALWAYS THE SAME!

A GENTLE SOUND STIRS THE HULK FROM HIS REVERIE...

"AND THE SCENE THAT GREETS THE JADE GIANT'S EYES IS IDYLLIC INDEED!

HULK KNOWS THIS PLACE--

--BUT CAN'T REMEMBER FROM WHERE!

FROM FAIRYTALES TOLD TO A LONELY CHILD CHRISTENED ROBERT BRUCE BANNER--

--A LONG, LONG TIME AGO, ON ANOTHER WORLD, IN ANOTHER LIFETIME...

BEFORE THE BOY GREW INTO A MAN, BEFORE THE MAN BECAME A SCIENTIST, BEFORE THE SCIENTIST CREATED A GAMMA BOMB...

BEFORE THE BOMB CREATED A MONSTER!

OTHER MEMORIES RISE UNBIDDEN FROM THAT OTHER LIFETIME LIKE GHOSTS FROM THEIR GRAVES...

FAREWELL, MOTHER--DAD! I-I'LL MISS YOU BOTH!

HE 190

MEMORIES OF FAMILY--AND FRIENDS...

HULK'S FRIEND IS DEAD. EVERYONE HULK LOVES, HULK LOSES.

KRAKER JAK JAKSON

THEN THE MEMORIES FADE--

--AND THE HULK REMEMBERS WHAT HE HAS COME TO DO!.

HULK BURIED CRACKAJACK, AND NOW HULK MUST BURY JARELLA!

THE HULK'S MIGHTY FINGERS GOUGE THE GENTLE EARTH...

...AND SUDDENLY, STARTLINGLY, THE EARTH REACTS!

HUNHH?!

ROCKS AND EARTH FLY AT HULK--DRIVING HIM BACK FROM JARELLA!

TREES BEND DOWN AND HOLD HULK'S ARMS WHILE STONES HAMMER HULK BACK?!

ARRGH! NOW TREES TRY TO CHOKE HULK!

TRY TO KILL HULK!

BUT HULK HAS NOT COME ALL THE WAY TO JARELLA'S WORLD TO BE KILLED BY STUPID TREES!

ROCKS HAVE STOPPED FLYING AT HULK! TREES STOP GRABBING HIM! HULK HAS WON!

BUT HAS VALLEY HURT JARELLA?

UNTOUCHED, JARELLA SLEEPS THE ETERNAL SLEEP...

BUT THERE IS TO BE NO REST FOR THE UNWARY HULK!

SKROWR!

GRARGHH!

CAT-BEAST DIGS ITS CLAWS INTO HULK'S BACK--HURTING HULK!

CAT-BEAST MADE A BIG MISTAKE TRYING TO HURT HULK!

BRAM!

BECAUSE HULK KNOWS HOW TO TAKE PAIN --

--AND HOW TO *GIVE* IT!!

KABRAK!

CAT-BEAST IS GONE! NOW HULK CAN -- *GLAGGH!*

DRAGON RISES FROM WATERFALL AND SNAKES OUT TONGUE TO GRAB HULK--

--DRAGGING HULK TOWARD DRAGON'S MOUTH!!

BUT HULK WILL NOT BE FOOD FOR HUNGRY DRAGON!

AND HULK WILL NOT LET MONSTERS OF VALLEY OF LIFE DRIVE HIM AWAY!

SLAP

SPLOOSH

DRAGON IS DEAD! IT COULD NOT KEEP HULK FROM JARELLA! NOTHING CAN--

SKREE

SKREE

SKREE

BRZZZ

BRZZZ

SKREE

NOW MONKEYS AND BUGS TRY TO GET IN HULK'S WAY!

BUT HULK IS TIRED OF FIGHTING--

--TIRED OF BEING KEPT AWAY FROM JARELLA!

NOW, HULK WILL DRIVE VALLEY CREATURES AWAY FROM HIM!!

THE THUNDEROUS CLAP SENDS THE STUNNED AND STARTLED CREATURES OF THE VALLEY OF LIFE SCURRYING FROM THE GREAT GREEN GOLIATH THEY'D SOUGHT TO DRAG DOWN!

BUGS AND BEASTS ARE GONE, JARELLA! HULK HAS SENT THEM ALL AWAY!

WE ARE ALONE AGAIN, AND NOW HULK WILL FINISH WHAT HE STARTED!

NO, MONSTER, YOU WILL NOT!

HUNH? WHO TELLS HULK WHAT TO DO??

ONE WHO WAS DRIVEN TO THIS PLACE BY THE VIOLENCE OF THE SO-CALLED "CIVILIZED" BEINGS OF THE GALAXY! ONE WHO SOUGHT TO CREATE HERE A HAVEN OF PEACE!

I AM THE GARDENER, HULK-- AND, WHILE THE DEAD MAY FIND ETERNAL REST HERE -- NO LIVING HUMAN, BESIDES MYSELF, SHALL FIND SHELTER IN MY VALLEY OF LIFE!

NEXT ISSUE: How Green Grows My Garden!

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THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

MARVEL'S TV SENSATION!™

HOW GREEN GROWS... THE GARDENER!

Caught in the heart of a ***Nuclear Explosion,*** victim of ***Gamma-Radiation*** gone wild, ***Doctor Robert Bruce Banner*** now finds himself transformed in times of stress into seven feet, one thousand pounds of unfettered ***Fury***—the most powerful creature to ever walk the earth—

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INCREDIBLE HULK!®

HAVING DISCOVERED THAT GAMMA BASE HELD, PRESERVED, THE BODY OF HIS DEAR, DEAD JARELLA... THE HULK ATTACKED GAMMA BASE!

LONG AGO, THE HULK HAD PROMISED TO BEAR JARELLA HOME TO HER SUBATOMIC WORLD CALLED K'AI!

UPON RECOVERING JARELLA'S BODY, THE HULK DROPPED INTO THE MICROVERSE--

--AIDED BY CAPTAIN MARVEL, WHOSE COSMIC AWARENESS LOCATED K'AI AMIDST THE VASTNESS OF SUBSPACE!

USING GAMMA BASE'S MICRON-CANNON, MAR-VELL SHRUNK THE HULK DOWN IN SIZE...

...AT WHICH POINT THE MICRON-CANNON WAS DESTROYED--

--BY COLONEL GLENN TALBOT, COMMANDER OF GAMMA BASE, WHO HOPED TO KEEP THE HULK OFF EARTH FOR-EVER!

BUT TALBOT HAD ALSO EXILED HIS HATED FOE TO A COLD, DEAD, STONE WORLD!

THIS IS NOT K'AI! WHERE ARE TREES? FLOWERS? PEOPLE?

K'AI IT **WAS**, HOWEVER! A WORLD THROWN BACK TO THE PRIMITIVE! STILL, ITS PEOPLE REJOICED TO SEE THE HULK, THEIR KING...

...EVEN AS THEY MOURNED FOR THEIR QUEEN!

WHILE, ON EARTH, THE HULK'S FEW REMAINING FRIENDS GATHERED TO BID HIM A SOLEMN FAREWELL!

THE HULK GONE? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

OH, BRUCE! BRUCE!

THE HULK STILL FACED A DANGER GREATER THAN BEING LOST IN SUB-SPACE!

YONDER LIES THE VALLEY OF LIFE, THE ONLY FERTILE AREA LEFT ON K'AI! THERE MUST JARELLA BE BURIED!

WHILE IT ACCEPTS THE DEAD, NO ***LIVING*** SOUL HAS GONE THERE AND RETURNED!

YET, THE HULK DARED ENTER THE VALLEY OF LIFE, BEARING IN HIS MONSTROUS ARMS THE CORPSE OF HIS BELOVED JARELLA, WHOM HE HAD BROUGHT HERE FOR BURIAL! AT ONCE THE VALLEY ROSE AGAINST THE BRUTE, KEEPING HIM FROM HIS TASK, FOR SUCH WERE THE ORDERS OF THE ONE WHO WAS MASTER HERE ...THE **GARDENER!**

HOW GREEN MY GARDEN GROWS!

WHY DID OLD MAN TELL HIS GARDEN TO ATTACK HULK? **WHY?**

MERELY TO HAVE TRODDEN UPON THIS SACRED GROUND IS REASON ENOUGH, MONSTER! IN THIS VALLEY I HAVE CREATED A PARADISE, AND NO LIVING HUMAN SHALL EVER FIND SHELTER IN ITS SHADE!

BILL MANTLO, WRITER
SAL BUSCEMA, ARTIST
JIM NOVAK, LETTERS
BEN SEAN, COLORS
ALLEN MILGROM, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

WHY DID YOU NOT HEED THE CORPSE-STREWN RING OF CROSSES SURROUNDING THE VALLEY?

MORE CLEARLY THAN WORDS THEY ANNOUNCE THAT HERE IS NO PLACE FOR THE LIVING!

BUT HULK HAS BROUGHT JARELLA HERE, OLD MAN!

AND JARELLA IS DEAD!

THEN *SHE* WILL BE MADE WELCOME, AND WILL BE LAID TO REST, AS BEFITS HER QUEENLY STATION!

FOR THE DEAD SOW NO STRIFE IN THE VALLEY OF LIFE! BEAR HER AWAY, MY FRIENDS!

YOU TAKE JARELLA FROM HULK?

NO! HULK MUST BE WITH JARELLA TO THE END! THAT IS WHAT HULK PROMISED!

I'M AFRAID THAT IS IMPOSSIBLE, CREATURE! BUT AS I AM NOT WITHOUT COMPASSION--

--I WILL TRY TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND WHY LIVING HUMANS, OTHER THAN MYSELF, ARE FORBIDDEN THIS VALLEY'S BOUNTY!

AND, THAT YOU MAY BETTER COMPREHEND, I CAUSE THE RAGE OF THE BEAST TO GIVE WAY TO THE REASON OF... THE MAN!

THE EMERALD GEM ON THE GARDENER'S BROW GLOWS WITH SUDDEN FIRE...

...AND THE FURY-CLOUDED VISION OF THE TRAPPED BRUTE GIVES WAY TO THE CLEAR-EYED GAZE OF THE CURIOUS SCIENTIST... CONFUSED, BUT EAGER TO UNDERSTAND!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HULK? NO! HULK KNOWS!

YOU ARE SENDING HULK AWAY! MAKING HIM CHANGE PLACES WITH PUNY BANNER!

HULK HATES BANNER!

HATES--! HUNH?

W-WHERE AM I?

IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT'S HOLY, WHAT'S THE HULK GOTTEN ME INTO NOW??

THE VOICE, THOUGH GUTTURAL, IS BRUCE BANNER'S!

WHERE AM I? WHO ARE YOU? HOW DID I GET HERE? AND HOW IS IT THE HULK HAS GOT BRUCE BANNER'S MIND??

THE SOUL GEM SENSED THE DUALITY OF YOUR NATURE-- AND FREED THE MAN FROM THE MONSTER!

AS FOR THE REST-- YOU ARE IN MY VALLEY OF LIFE, THE ONLY FERTILE SPOT ON THE OTHERWISE DESOLATE SUB-ATOMIC WORLD OF K'AI!

YOU CAME HERE BRINGING K'AI'S QUEEN FOR BURIAL-- AND FOUGHT THE VALLEY WHEN IT TRIED TO TURN YOU BACK!

NOW THAT YOU ARE CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING, I WILL EXPLAIN WHY!

RELAX YOUR MIND, AND PAY HEED AS THE SOUL GEM TRANSMITS... *THE STORY OF THE GARDENER!*

"I AM ONE OF THE *ELDERS* WHO CAME TO YOUR UNIVERSE IN THE WAKE OF CREATION!

"BROTHERS HAD I, ONE WHO LOVED TO STUDY, ANOTHER WHO ENGAGED IN ENDLESS SPORT!

"BUT I SOUGHT ONLY PEACE, A RETURN TO THE PARADISE FROM WHENCE WE CAME.

"UNFORTUNATELY, THIS ROAD WAS BARRED TO US. I TRIED TO CREATE PARADISE ANEW...

"...AND MY *GARDEN* SPRANG TO LIFE ON EARTH'S MOON!

"THE POWER OF MY SOUL GEM SOON DREW THE SINISTER *STRANGER*, WHO CRAVED THE GEM FOR HIS OWN!

"I THOUGHT MY PRESENCE MIGHT GO UNDISCOVERED AS THE SOUL GEM OF *ADAM WARLOCK* DIVERTED THE STRANGER--!

"--BUT *SPIDER-MAN* SOON CONVINCED ME THAT I COULD NOT REMAIN NEUTRAL!

"THUS, I JOINED MY POWER TO WARLOCK'S, AND WE DROVE THE STRANGER FROM THE MOON!

"IN SO DOING, I *CORRUPTED* MY GEM, EXPENDING ITS POWER TO SUPPORT LIFE, AND I ABANDONED IT ON THE BARREN LUNAR PLANE...

"...WHERE IT WAS SOON FOUND BY HE WHO REPRESENTED THE DARK SIDE OF LIFE... *THANOS!*

"FOR THANOS MEANS DEATH!

"MINE WAS THE FIFTH OF SIX *SOUL GEMS* WHICH, TOGETHER, WOULD INVEST THANOS WITH AWESOME POWER! COMBINING THE FIVE GEMS HE POSSESSED, AND SECRETLY SIPHONING THE POWER OF ADAM WARLOCK'S SIXTH GEM...

"...THANOS COMBINED THEIR PROPERTIES INTO A SINGLE LARGE *SYNTHETIC GEM* WITH THE POWER TO EXTINGUISH ALL THE STARS!

"A THREAT WHICH WAS STOPPED ONLY BY THE COMBINED POWER OF THE *AVENGERS*--

"--THE *THING*, *SPIDER-MAN*... AND *WARLOCK*, REINCARNATED AS THE *ULTIMATE AVENGER!*

"THOUGH HE HAD BEEN SLAIN BY THANOS, WARLOCK COULD NOT REST WHILE HIS UNIVERSE WAS ENDANGERED--

"--AND SO HE ROSE TO SLAY THANOS IN TURN, TRANSFORMING THE DEATH-GOD TO SOLID GRANITE!

"AT LAST, WARLOCK, WHO WAS BORN ON EARTH, A PROTOTYPE FOR HUMANITY'S FUTURE, LOST HIS INNOCENCE AND HIS LIFE PROTECTING THE VALUES HE CHERISHED...

"...LIGHT, LIFE AND TRUTH!

"HAVING DIED A SECOND TIME, HE WAS BURIED ALONGSIDE TWO OTHER VICTIMS OF THANOS' WAR!

" AFTER PLACING HIS SOUL GEM ON THE FRESHLY-TURNED GRAVE, THE ASSEMBLED EARTH HEROES TOOK THEIR LEAVE OF ADAM WARLOCK...

HERE LIES
ADAM WARLOCK
GOD SLAYER,
SAVIOR OF TWO WORLDS,
AND TORMENTED SOUL.
MAY HE NOW BE AT PEACE.
1967 1977

"THAT IS WHERE I, FOLLOWING THE SOUL GEM'S EMANATIONS --

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"--CLAIMED IT, FOR IT BORE WITHIN IT THE POWER WHICH WAS MINE BY RIGHT--THE POWER TO MAKE WORLDS BLOOM!

"THE SOUL OF THAT VALIANT WARRIOR WOULD FOREVER BE AT PEACE--

"--RESIDING IN THE GEM IN MY SAFEKEEPING!"

THEN I JOURNEYED HERE, TO SUB-ATOMIC K'AI, SWEARING NEVER AGAIN TO PLACE THE POWERS OF THE SOUL GEM BEFORE UNDESERVING HUMANITY!

THE INNOCENT ARE WELCOME HERE! THE BIRDS! THE BEASTS--

--AND THE DEAD!

BUT MAN, WHO SPREADS DISCORD WHEREVER HE GOES, IS NOT WELCOME! FAREWELL, HUMAN! LEAVE MY VALLEY!

...OR DIE!

WAIT, BLAST IT! YOU CAN'T TAKE JARELLA FROM ME!

I LOVED HER! AND SHE LOVED THE MAN I WAS... AND THE MONSTER I'D BECOME!

I OWE HER AT LEAST A DECENT BURIAL! CAN'T YOU EVEN GRANT ME THAT?

OH, WHAT'S THE USE? HE'S GONE!

WHY IS IT EVERY-THING I'VE EVER LOVED IS TAKEN FROM ME?

AM I NEVER TO KNOW PEACE?

NEVER??

PLEASE??!

HUH? MY DESPAIR MUST'VE SLOWED MY PULSE DOWN! I'VE BECOME BRUCE BANNER PHYSICALLY AS WELL AS MENTALLY!

AND THE VINES MEANT TO HOLD THE HULK DROP AWAY FROM MY SMALLER FORM!

WELL, I'M FREE-- BUT WHAT DO I DO WITH MY FREEDOM?

FORGET THE HULK'S PROMISE TO JARELLA? LEAVE HER UNTENDED IN THE GARDENER'S GRASP?

NO! BRUCE BANNER MAY NOT POSSESS THE HULK'S HALF A TON OF GREAT GREEN MUSCLE, BUT HE'S NO QUITTER EITHER!

I'M COMING, JARELLA--AND NOTHING IN THIS VALLEY OF LIFE WILL STOP ME!

AND SO HE GOES...

WHILE, ON A DEVASTATED LANDING FIELD BACK ON EARTH, HIS FRIENDS BID EACH OTHER A FINAL FAREWELL!

WHERE WILL YOU GO NOW, MS. ROSS? BACK TO DENVER?

THERE FIRST, TO EXCHANGE THIS PLANE FOR A SEAPLANE -- THEN ON INTO THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS SO FRED SLOAN CAN INTERVIEW MY FATHER FOR HIS BOOK ABOUT THE HULK.

THEN HE INTENDS TO FINISH IT? I'M GLAD. THERE IS MUCH THAT I GLEANED FROM MY CONTACT WITH THAT POOR, TORTURED BRUTE THAT HUMANITY COULD STAND TO LEARN AS WELL!

HOW QUICKLY YOU LEARNED A TRUTH ABOUT THE HULK THAT IT TOOK THE REST OF US SO MANY YEARS TO COMPREHEND, CAPTAIN MARVEL.

"AND, EVEN SO, MEN LIKE MY EX-HUSBAND STILL FEAR AND TRY TO DESTROY A CREATURE BETTER DESERVING OF OUR PITY!

"NOW, BY DESTROYING THE MICRON-CANNON, GLENN HAS SUCCEEDED IN BANISHING THE HULK FROM EARTH -- FOREVER!

YOU KNOW, IT WASN'T SO MUCH THE HULK THAT GLENN FEARED -- BUT ME!

HE COULD NEVER BELIEVE THAT I HAD GOTTEN OVER MY LOVE FOR BRUCE BANNER, EVEN AFTER I CONSENTED TO BECOME MRS. GLENN TALBOT!

HIS INSANE JEALOUSY CAME BETWEEN US MORE THAN BRUCE EVER DID!

BUT NOW, STRANGELY ENOUGH, I CAN THANK GLENN FOR AWAKENING ME TO THE REALIZATION THAT -- WHEREVER HE IS --

-- I MAY YET LOVE BRUCE BANNER!

ELYSIUS AND I MUST GO NOW, BETTY!

THERE IS MUCH I HAVE TO SHOW HER OF EARTH -- AND MUCH, I I HOPE, THAT IS GOOD!

MRS. TALBOT! WAIT!

I'M DIVORCED, SOLDIER! MY MAIDEN NAME'S ROSS!

ER -- YES, MA'AM! BUT I'VE BEEN ORDERED TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR HUSBAND -- THAT IS, YOUR EX-HUSBAND -- WOULD LIKE TO SEE YOU BEFORE YOU LEAVE GAMMA BASE.

YOU CAN TELL COL. TALBOT I HAVE NO WISH TO SEE HIM, SOLDIER --

-- NOW... OR EVER AGAIN!

THE SMALL PLANE DRONES OFF INTO THE DISTANCE -- LEAVING GLENN TALBOT ALONE WITH HIS THOUGHTS!

THE PLANE HEADS NORTHWARD TOWARD THE MOUNTAINS OF COLORADO WHERE TWO HUNTERS CLIMB IN SEARCH OF GAME!

HOW ARE YOU FEELING, GENERAL ROSS?

GENERAL "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS DOES NOT RESPOND! HIS DRAWN AND ANGUISHED FEATURES GIVE NO CLUE THAT HE WAS, ONCE, ONE OF THIS COUNTRY'S FOREMOST MILITARY TACTICIANS!

BUT THEN, THE GREEN HAIR AND POWERFUL PHYSIQUE OF HIS COMPANION--

--WOULD NOT IDENTIFY DR. LEONARD SAMSON AS A BRILLIANT PSYCHIATRIST, EITHER!

NOW, THE DOCTOR HAS SOUGHT, THROUGH SPORT, TO GET HIS PATIENT'S MIND OFF THE CAUSE OF HIS RECENT NERVOUS COLLAPSE: NAMELY--

--THE GENERAL'S FAILURE TO APPREHEND THE MAN-MONSTER KNOWN AS THE HULK!

THE DOGS HAVE SCENTED SOMETHING, GENERAL!

WHATEVER IT IS SEEMS TO HAVE THEM CONFUSED!

I'VE NEVER SEEN THEM ACT SO UNCERTAINLY ABOUT A SCENT BEFORE!

AH, HERE THEY GO! THE GAME'S AS GOOD AS IN THE BAG RIGHT NOW!

ROWR ROWR AWROOOOO!

BUT WHAT IS IT? DEER? MOUNTAIN LION?

NO, DR. SAMSON! IT IS SOMETHING NO HUNTER CAN POSSIBLY HAVE COME PREPARED FOR!

GOOD HEAVENS! THE CREATURE THE DOGS HAVE SCENTED, IT-- IT'S MONSTROUS!

MONSTER! EVEN HERE HE HOUNDS ME! MOCKS ME!

PTOW!

GENERAL ROSS!

DID YOU SEE, SAMPSON? IT WAS HIM! THE HULK!!

I-I SAW SOMETHING, GENERAL--SHADOWY, INHUMAN! BUT IT WASN'T THE HULK!

BEFORE WE LEFT THE CABIN, COL. TALBOT CALLED TO SAY HE'D GOTTEN RID OF THE HULK FOREVER!

THAT NEWS STARTLES THE OLD GENERAL...

WHILE, ON THE SUB-ATOMIC WORLD OF K'AI, JARELLA'S PEOPLE WAIT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VALLEY OF LIFE, FOR WORD FROM THEIR KING!

THE HULK HAS BEEN GONE LONG!

SURELY, HE IS DEAD!

I-I FEAR YOU ARE RIGHT, FELLOW COUNSELLORS!

WE SHOWED OUR KING THE GRIM PORTENTS BIDDING HUMANS STAY OUT OF YONDER VALE, BUT HE IGNORED THEM!

YET, I HAVE FAITH IN THE HULK AND WILL WAIT A WHILE LONGER FOR HIS RETURN!

MAY YOUR FAITH BE MIGHTY ENOUGH TO PRESERVE YOU THEN, WISE TORLA!

FOR WE ARE ABOUT TO BE DRIVEN FROM EVEN THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VALLEY OF LIFE!

OUR KING MUST BE DEAD! FLEE ALL! FLEE FOR YOUR LIVES!

GODS OF K'AI! THE VALLEY-DWELLERS STAMPEDE UPON US!

MEANWHILE, UNAWARE OF THE IMPENDING DOOM BEARING DOWN UPON JARELLA'S PEOPLE, BRUCE BANNER FOLLOWS THE TRAIL OF THOSE WHO HAVE STOLEN THE BODY OF HIS QUEEN...

ALL OF K'AI ONCE RESEMBLED THIS VALLEY-- UNTIL THE HULK SHATTERED A MICROSCOPIC SLIDE CONTAINING THIS SUB-MOLECULAR WORLD...

...AND SENT IT CAREENING THROUGH SUB-SPACE!

THIS WORLD HAS OFFERED THE HULK AND ME NOTHING BUT HAPPINESS--AND WE'VE REPAID IT BY NEARLY CAUSING ITS DESTRUCTION, AND BY INADVERTANTLY CAUSING THE DEATH OF ITS QUEEN!

WATER! I WONDER WHEN THE HULK ATE OR DRANK LAST!

I'VE GOT TO STOP-- REFRESH MYSELF! REST!

AND THEN GET BACK ON JARELLA'S TRAIL!

BUT THIS IS NO ORDINARY STREAM!

EVERYTHING IN THE GARDEN OF LIFE OBEYS THE GARDENER'S INJUNCTION: NO HUMANS!

WHAT--? A WATERY TENDRIL, GRABBING MY ARM!

DRAGGING ME INTO THE STREAM!

CURRENT'S INCREDIBLY STRONG-- PULLING ME UNDER!

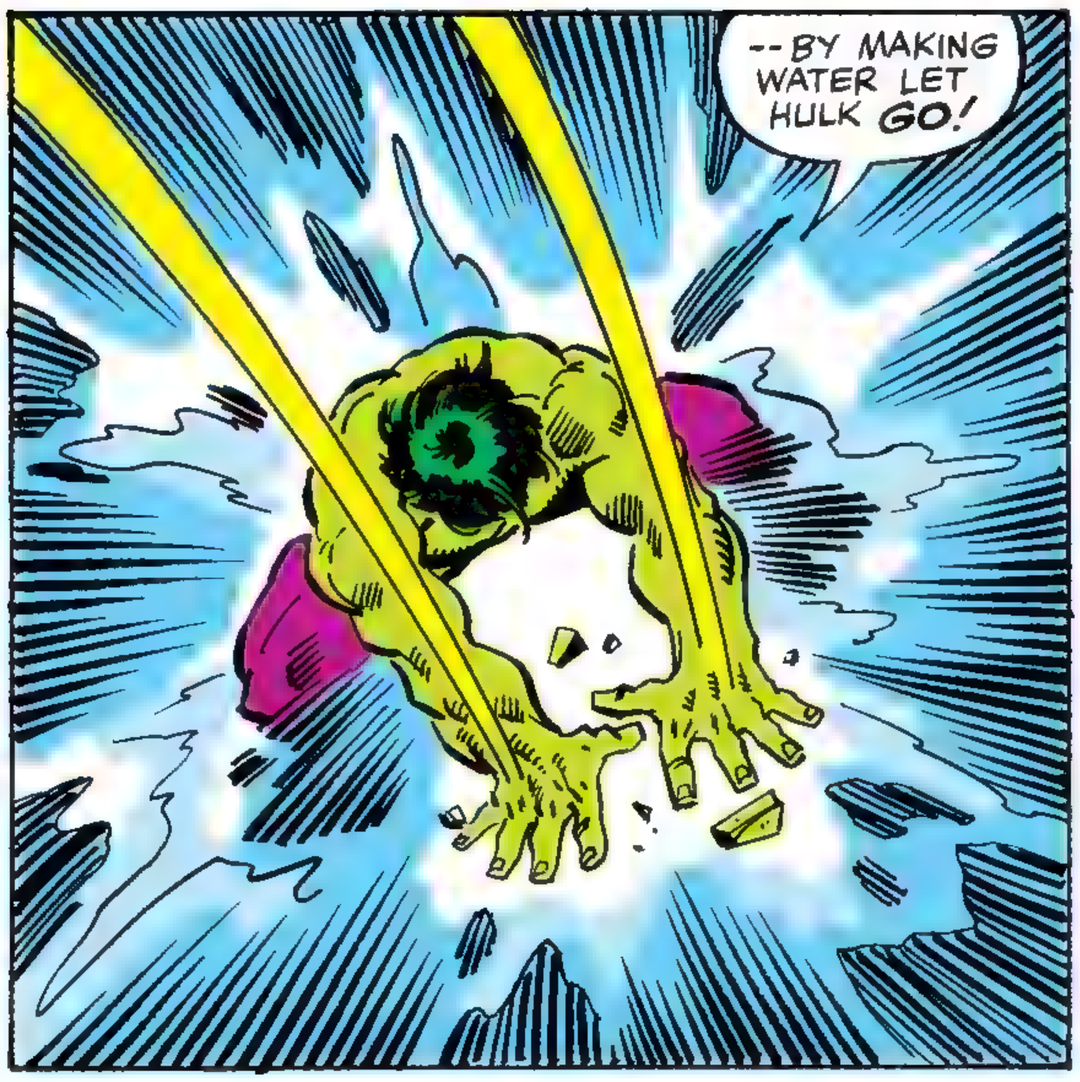
I-IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING TO SAVE MYSELF, I-I'LL DROWN!

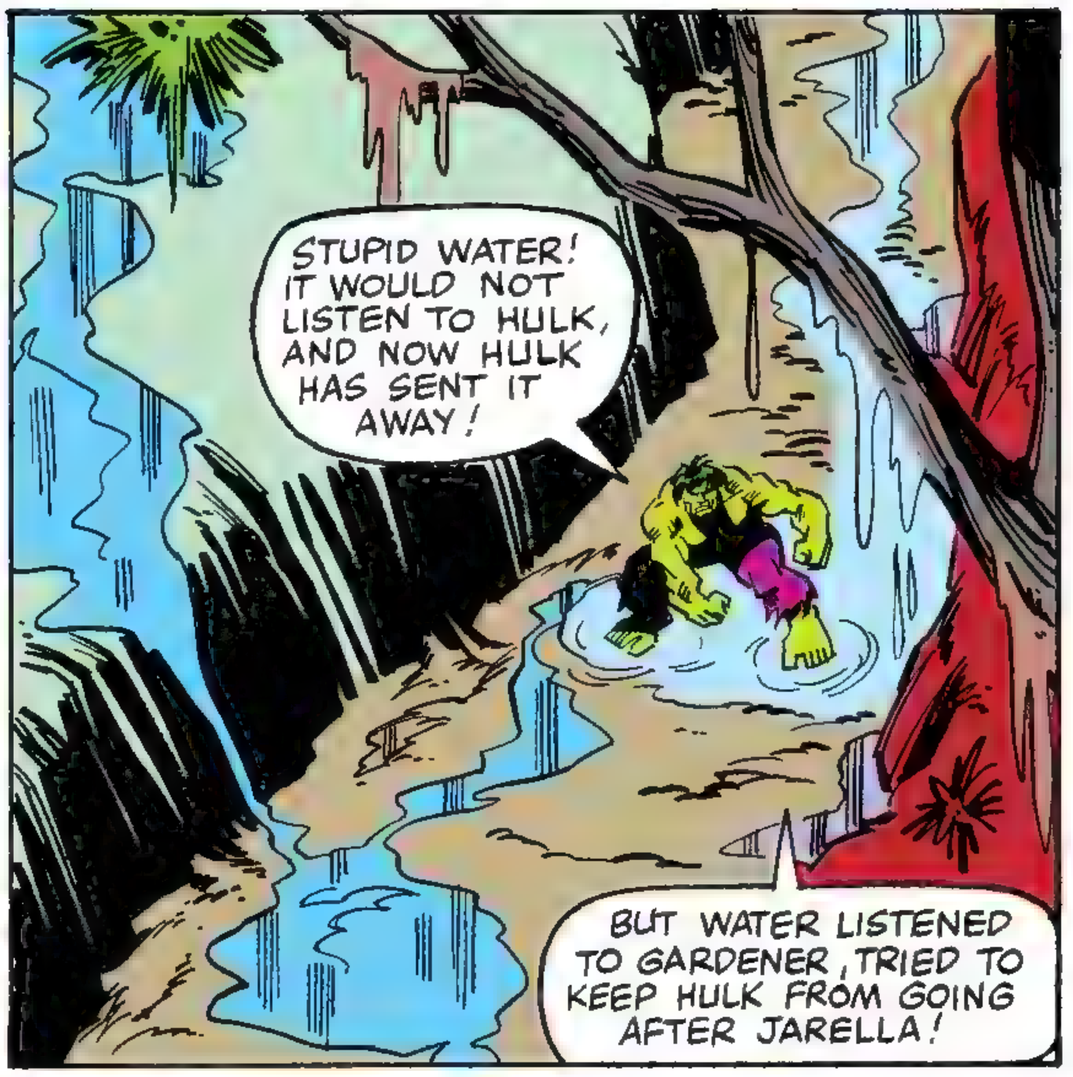
NO!

WATER MIGHT DROWN PUNY BANNER, BUT WATER WILL NOT DROWN *THE HULK!* HULK IS STRONGER THAN WATER!

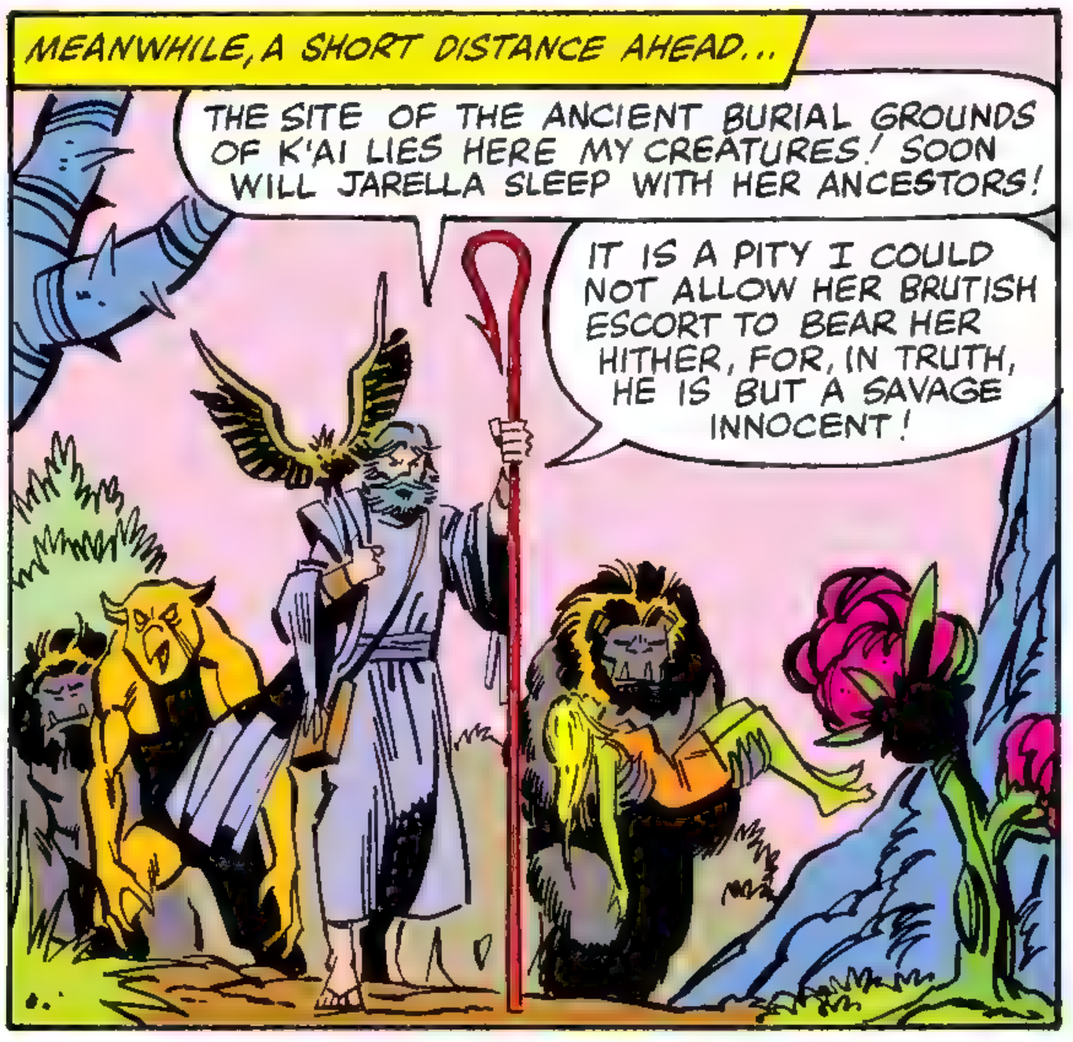
STRONGER THAN WHIRLPOOL! STRONGER THAN ANYTHING!!

AND HULK WILL PROVE HOW STRONG HE IS--

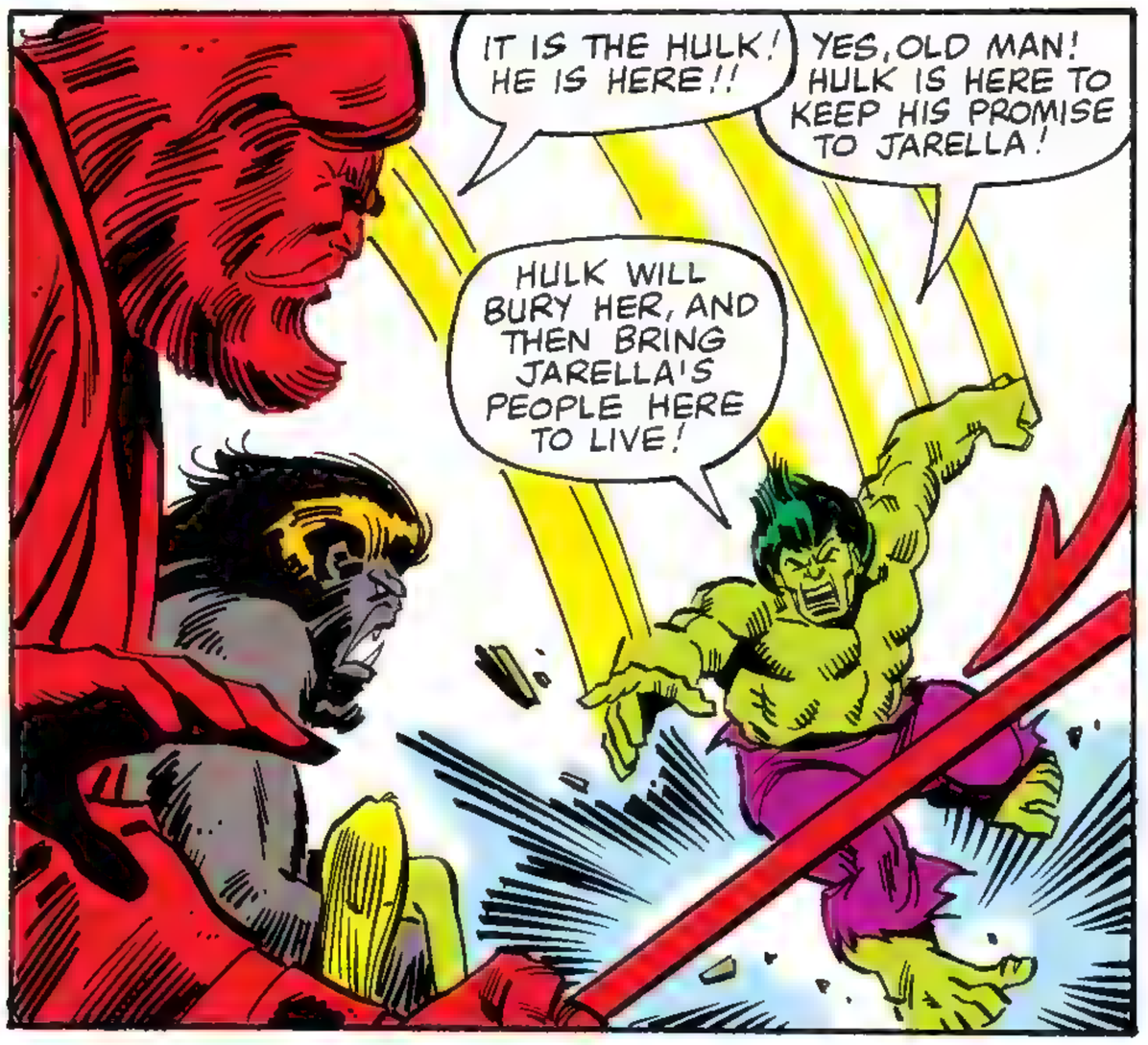

--BY MAKING WATER LET HULK GO!


STUPID WATER! IT WOULD NOT LISTEN TO HULK, AND NOW HULK HAS SENT IT AWAY!
BUT WATER LISTENED TO GARDENER, TRIED TO KEEP HULK FROM GOING AFTER JARELLA!

NOW HULK WILL FIND OLD MAN GARDENER... AND GET JARELLA BACK!


MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE AHEAD...
THE SITE OF THE ANCIENT BURIAL GROUNDS OF K'AI LIES HERE MY CREATURES! SOON WILL JARELLA SLEEP WITH HER ANCESTORS!
IT IS A PITY I COULD NOT ALLOW HER BRUTISH ESCORT TO BEAR HER HITHER, FOR, IN TRUTH, HE IS BUT A SAVAGE INNOCENT!

YET THE PEOPLE OF K'AI HAVE NAMED HIM THEIR KING -- AND I DARE NOT RISK DESPOILING THIS VALLEY BY OPENING IT TO THE MASS OF PETTY HUMANITY!
EH? THAT CRASHING IN THE TREE-TOPS--??


IT IS THE HULK! HE IS HERE!!
YES, OLD MAN! HULK IS HERE TO KEEP HIS PROMISE TO JARELLA!
HULK WILL BURY HER, AND THEN BRING JARELLA'S PEOPLE HERE TO LIVE!

HERE? TO MY PARADISE? NO, MONSTER! IT CANNOT BE!

AIDING HUMANITY COST ME MY GARDEN ON EARTH'S MOON! I HAVE SWORN NEVER AGAIN TO SACRIFICE BEAUTY FOR THE BENEFIT OF MAN!

YOU ARE MIGHTY, HULK--BUT I AM OF THE ELDER RACE, AN IMMORTAL CAPABLE OF RECREATING PARADISE...AND OF DEFENDING IT!

WITH A NOD OF HIS HEAD, THE GARDENER BIDS HIS MENAGERIE ATTACK...

...AND THE HULK IS LOST TO SIGHT BENEATH A SNARLING SWIRL OF BIZARRE, BESTIAL BODIES!

BUT NOT FOR LONG!

AWAY, ANIMALS! HULK'S FIGHT IS NOT WITH YOU!

NO! I AM YOUR FOE, MONSTER--BUT EVERY BIRD AND BEAST THAT DRAWS BREATH IN THIS VALLEY IS MINE TO COMMAND!

OLD MAN SENDS BIRDS AND BUGS TO DRIVE HULK AWAY?

HULK WILL SEE IF BIRDS AND BUGS CAN FLY IN A BIG WIND!

FWROO-

WHOOSHH!

AT THAT MOMENT, OUTSIDE THE VALLEY...

LOOK TO THE SKY, PEOPLE, OF K'AI!

A BLOW HAS BEEN STRUCK AGAINST THE VALLEY! FIGHT ON WITH RENEWED COURAGE, FOR IT IS A SIGN THAT THE HULK--OUR KING --YET LIVES!

LIVES, YES! AND FIGHTS!

HULK HAS BLOWN AWAY YOUR BIRDS AND BUGS, OLD MAN! HULK HAS BEATEN YOUR BEASTS!

YES, MONSTER!

BUT NOW YOU FACE THE FURY OF THE ELDERS, ENCASED IN THE BLAZING SOUL GEM I WEAR AT MY BROW-- AND EMBODIED IN MYSELF!

HULK DOES NOT CARE ABOUT ELDERS OR PRETTY STONES! HULK FIGHTS FOR JARELLA AND JARELLA'S WORLD--

--AND THAT IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR HULK!

BY THE STARS! YOU GRASP MY STAFF WITH A POWER WELL NIGH EQUAL TO MY OWN!

WHAT MANNER OF MORTAL ARE YOU?

HULK IS HULK! HULK IS THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!

AS THE DUEL OF TITANS TRANSPIRES WITHIN THE GARDEN, THE TIDE OF BATTLE TURNS WITHOUT!

FIGHT, MEN OF K'AI! DRIVE THE VALLEY DEMONS BACK!

FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD--AND FOR OUR KING!

AYE-- FOR THE HULK!

NEVER IN HIS EVENTFUL LIFE HAS THE HULK HEARD HIS NAME RAISED AS A CLARION CALL TO BATTLE--NOR IS HE WITHIN EARSHOT TO HEAR IT NOW!

BUT, AS IF HE SENSES THE FAITH JARELLA'S PEOPLE PLACE IN HIM--

--HE PRESSES HIS STRUGGLE WITH THE GARDENER... TO VICTORY!

AWAY, OLD MAN! HULK HAS YOUR STICK!

AND YOUR PRETTY STONE!

A SOUL GEM OF THE ELDER RACE IN THE HANDS OF A MORTAL? NO, IT MUST NOT BE!

IT IS, OLD MAN! AND HULK REMEMBERS YOU SAID THAT IT WAS PRETTY STONE THAT GIVES VALLEY LIFE!

IF STONE CAN DO THAT--

--THEN STONE CAN MAKE JARELLA'S PLANET LIVE!

THE HULK HURLS THE SOUL GEM DOWN:

DOWN THROUGH THE PLANET'S MANTLE...

DOWN THROUGH THE PLANET'S CRUST...

DOWN TO THE VERY CORE OF K'AI!

AND, WHEN THE SOUL GEM MERGES WITH THE PLANET'S MOLTEN HEART...

...A MAGICAL TRANSFORMATION COMES OVER THE FACE OF K'AI!

ALL FIGHTING STOPS, AS MEN BEFRIEND BEASTS!

THEIR BATTLE NO LONGER HAS MEANING. IT WAS A WAR BETWEEN THOSE WHO POSSESSED PARADISE AND THOSE WHO WANTED A SHARE!

NOW, NEW LIFE SPRINGS FORTH, ALL OVER THE SURFACE OF THE PLANET K'AI, AND THERE IS PEACE AND PLENTY FOR ALL!

NOW *ALL* OF JARELLA'S WORLD IS LIKE YOUR VALLEY, OLD MAN! JARELLA'S PEOPLE WILL EAT!

NOW HULK HAS KEPT HIS PROMISE TO JARELLA'S PEOPLE!

NOW JARELLA CAN REST!

PARADISE TEEMS WITH THE SOUNDS OF LIFE...

BUT THERE IS A GREAT SILENCE IN THE HULK'S HEART!

UNTIL NOW HE HAS NOT FULLY ACCEPTED JARELLA'S DEATH!

BUT HOLDING THE LIFELESS BODY OF HIS BELOVED IN HIS MIGHTY ARMS, HE AT LAST UNDERSTANDS THAT JARELLA IS NEVER COMING BACK TO HIM!

SHE LIVED ONCE, BUT NOW IS GONE.

THE HULK ACCEPTS THAT, AND LAYS JARELLA IN HER GRAVE!

GENTLY COVERING HER WITH EARTH, THE INCREDIBLE HULK BURIES SOME OF HIS CHILDLIKE INNOCENCE WITH HER!

GOODBYE, JARELLA!

FAREWELL, OUR QUEEN.

LOOK! 'TIS A MIRACLE!

A MIRACLE, TRULY!

HUNH?!

NO, MAGICIAN -- IT IS NOT A MIRACLE! IT IS JUST JARELLA SAYING GOOD-BYE TO HULK ONE LAST TIME!

AND IS NOT LOVE'S TRIUMPH OVER THE GRAVE THE STUFF OF WHICH MIRACLES ARE MADE, HULK?

WHAT DO YOU WANT OLD MAN? TO CAUSE MORE TROUBLE?

NO, HULK... TO APOLOGIZE FOR AN OLD MAN'S SELFISHNESS!

I THOUGHT TO CREATE A HEAVEN HERE, BUT YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THAT I WROUGHT ONLY HELL!

PARADISE NEEDS PEOPLE, HULK -- AND SO DO I! MAY -- MAY I STAY?

IF OLD MAN WILL LIVE IN PEACE, YES!

AND YOU, HULK, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WANT? HULK HAS KEPT HIS PROMISE TO JARELLA!

NOW HULK JUST WANTS TO GO HOME!

THAT, HULK, IS A GIFT I CAN BESTOW!

AT THE TOUCH OF THE GARDENER'S STAFF, THE HULK BEGINS TO GROW!

FAREWELL, O KING! FAREWELL!

GOODBYE, FRIEND HULK!

HULK IS GETTING BIGGER! JARELLA'S WORLD IS LIKE A BALLOON AT HULK'S FEET!

SOON THEIR PLANES SEPARATE SPATIALLY AS THEY GROW EVER FURTHER APART!

HE IS GONE! OUR KING HAS LEFT!

WE ARE LEADERLESS AGAIN, WITHOUT KING OR QUEEN!

YET, THE HULK HAS LEFT YOU A FERTILE, PEACEFUL FUTURE, MEN OF K'AI --

--AND A MEMORY THAT WILL BLOOM IN YOUR HEARTS... FOREVER!

THE END

NEXT MONTH: JACK FROST NIPPING AT YOUR SOUL!

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JACK FROST NIPPING AT YOUR SOUL!

AN ANTHROPOLOGIST MIGHT WELL PONDER THE QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE SLEEPING HABITS OF THE GAMMA-IRRADIATED MAN-MONSTER MEN CALL THE INCREDIBLE HULK?

BILL MANTLO, STORY.
STEVE DITKO, ART.
I. WATANABE, LETTERS
BEN SEAN, COLORS
AL MILGROM, EDITOR
JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

AND, IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT SAID SCIENTIST WAS ABLE TO LOCATE HIS SUBJECT FOR A FIELD STUDY, HE WOULD FIND A HULK COMPLETELY AT REST...

LF4

HE IS TOTALLY OBLIVIOUS TO HIS PRESENT SURROUNDINGS...

...AND IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMING ONCE AGAIN--

--FROM MONSTER TO MAN!

HOW, THEN, WOULD ONE ONE DESCRIBE THE SLEEPING STATE OF THE HULK'S ALTER EGO... DOCTOR BRUCE BANNER?

TORTURED AND TORMENTED BY NIGHTMARES UNENDING--

--HE HAS DREAMS OF HIS BRUTISH "OTHER SIDE"--IN THE LATEST OF WHICH THE HULK IS DRIFTING THROUGH SOME SUB-MOLECULAR MICROVERSE...GROWING... RETURNING TO EARTH!

THAT IS ALL BRUCE BANNER CAN REMEMBER OF HIS SORROWFUL PILGRIMAGE TO K'AI...MINIATURE WORLD OF THE HULK'S DECEASED LOVED ONE--JARELLA.

BUT THIS LONESOME REVERIE IS ABOUT TO BE INTERRUPTED...

I'M TELLING YOU, ROG-- IT'S WEIRD!

THIS SUDDEN FROST, I MEAN, COVERING ONLY HALF THE MOUNTAIN!

'CAUSE THE COLD'S DRIVEN THE GAME DOWN THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE IN SEARCH OF FOOD, AND THAT PUTS 'EM WITHIN EASY RIFLE RANGE!

WEIRD IS RIGHT, BUT I AIN'T COMPLAINING!

ROG, THAT'S A DOE AND HER LITTLE ONE! THE LAW SAYS WE'RE ONLY SUPPOSED TO HUNT BUCKS!

BUCKS, SHUCKS! I WANT A WHITETAIL ON MY BUMPER WHEN I DRIVE BACK TO TOWN TONIGHT!

AND I COULD CARE LESS WHAT ITS AGE OR GENDER! HUH?

PTOW!

NO!

WHO IN BLAZES--?! SOME HALF-NAKED NUT JUMPING ME!

YOU SCARED OFF THE DEER, YOU MANIAC!

SWOK!

UNGHH!

DOWN THE SNOW COVERED EMBANKMENT HE TUMBLES...

...AS HIS NIGHTMARES GIVE WAY TO NIGHTMARISH REALITY!

ROG, YOU HURT THAT GUY! WE'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE!

NOT TILL I BAG ME SOME VENISON!

R-ROG! THAT GUY YOU HIT! HE'S NOT MOVIN'!

HE'S HALF BURIED IN THE SNOW, ROG!

WAIT, NOW HE'S STIRRIN', AND UH, OH...

I-IF I WERE YOU, ROG, I-I'D FORGET ABOUT THE VENISON!

B-BECAUSE WE'VE GOT COMPANY!

GRRARR!!

YAAGH! IT-IT'S A MONSTER!

THAT IS WHAT PUNY HUMANS ALWAYS CALL THE HULK! BUT IT WAS NOT HULK WHO SHOT AT BAMBIS--

--IT WAS PUNY HUMANS AND THEIR STUPID GUNS!

PLEASE! NO! I-I TRIED TO STOP HIM--!

HULK DOES NOT CARE! GO! LEAVE MOUNTAIN --OR HULK WILL SMASH!

DEPART THE FRIGHTENED HUNTER DOES...NOT THAT HE HAS ANY CHOICE!

WHILE, FURTHER UP THE SLOPE, UNAWARE OF HIS PARTNER'S PLIGHT, THE HUNTER AGAIN TAKES CAREFUL AIM...

...UNAWARE THAT HE, TOO, IS BEING STALKED!

WHAT ARE YOU TRYIN' TO DO, MORT? SPOIL MY...

...AIM?

HULK IS NOT MORT, HUMAN! HULK IS HULK!

AND YOU WILL SHOOT BAMBIS ONLY OVER HULK'S DEAD BODY!

B-BAMBIS? GREAT HEAVENS, YOU--YOU MEAN YOU DON'T WANT ME TO KILL THE DEER??!

BAMBIS! DEER! THE SAME THING! THEY ARE HULK'S FRIENDS! HULK WON'T LET YOU HURT THEM!

STAY BACK, I-I'M WARNING YOU! C-COME ANY CLOSER AND I'LL S-SHOOT!

POW POW PTOW

S-SWEET SERENADES OF ANGELS! THOSE WERE HIGH-POWERED HUNTING SHELLS... A-AND THEY JUST BOUNCED OFF THE MONSTER'S CHEST!

YOU SHOT AT HULK? NOW HULK WILL SHOW YOU--!

Y-YOU DON'T NEED TO SHOW ME ANYTHING!

BRAK!

THERE! SEE? I'VE BROKEN MY RIFLE!

AND NOW I'M LEAVING... FOR GOOD! I WON'T EVER HUNT AGAIN!

IN FACT, I'VE JUST BECOME A VEGETARIAN!

BAH! WORDS! PUNY HUMANS ALWAYS USE WORDS TO CONFUSE HULK!

BA-

WHOOM!

MAYBE HUMAN LIES! MAYBE HE TELLS THE TRUTH! HULK DOES NOT CARE, BECAUSE HULK WILL MAKE SURE PUNY HUMAN DOES WHAT HE PROMISES.

TH-THAT SOUND-- LIKE A THUNDER-CLAP! IT'S CAUSED AN AVALANCHE BEHIND US!

RUN!! OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO GET OFF THE MOUNTAIN!

HUNTERS ARE GONE! BAMBIS ARE SAFE!

AND HULK IS ALONE AGAIN! GOOD! THAT IS HOW HULK LIKES--! EH?

STUPID SNOW HULK STARTED KEEPS COMING--SWEEPING HULK FROM HIS FEET!

HULK IS *FALLING!!*

BUT HULK CAN STOP HIMSELF WHENEVER HE WANTS BY DIGGING HIS FINGERS INTO THE MOUNTAIN! HUNH?

MOUNTAIN IS HIDDEN UNDERNEATH SOFT SNOW WHICH HULK CANNOT GRAB!

THERE ARE SOME INSTANCES WHERE EVEN THE HULK'S FAR-FABLED STRENGTH IS OF NO AVAIL!

THIS IS ONE SUCH INSTANCE!

DOWN THE MOUNTAINSIDE HE TUMBLES--DOWN SOME VAST TUBULAR CHASM IN THE MOUNTAIN'S SIDE! DOWN INTO DARKNESS...

MEANWHILE, A SMALL SEAPLANE SOARS OVER THE FOOTHILLS OF THE COLORADO ROCKIES!

THERE'S THE LAKE! DAD'S CABIN CAN'T BE FAR NOW!

WITHIN IT RIDE TWO PASSENGERS AND THE PLANE'S PILOT...

...THREE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES, OVER A PERIOD OF YEARS, HAVE BECOME INEXTRICABLY INTERTWINED WITH THAT OF THE JADE GIANT MEN CALL... THE HULK!

ARE YOU SURE YOUR FATHER WILL SEE US, BETTY?

ARE WE SURE WE WANT HIM TO, FRED?

DADDY'S ILL-NESS HAS ROBBED HIM OF SOME OF HIS OLD "BITE", RICK!

HE'S NOT THE SAME "FIRE-EATER" HE WAS WHEN YOU WERE THE HULK'S SIDEKICK!

BESIDES, WE DON'T WANT TO PREJUDICE FRED'S OPINION FOR THE BOOK HE'S WRITING ABOUT THE HULK!

MOMENTS LATER, INSIDE THE SECLUDED HUNTING CABIN...

NICE FLYING, BETTY! YOU BROUGHT US IN LIKE A PRO!

I AM A PROFESSIONAL, RICK! I HAD TO BE MORE IN LIFE THAN JUST THE DAUGHTER OF GENERAL "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS!

FUNNY THAT NEITHER DADDY NOR DR. SAMSON IS HERE TO GREET US!

I TOLD LEONARD I'D BE COMING HERE!

GUN RACKS ARE EMPTY! MAYBE THEY WENT HUNTING!

DADDY'S SPENT HIS WHOLE LIFE HUNTING ONE THING OR ANOTHER, FRED! DURING THE WAR, IT WAS THE ENEMY! THEN, IN THE 50s, IT WAS THE RED MENACE!

THE 1960s GAVE DADDY A NEW PREY-- AND A PERSONAL NEMESIS--THE HULK!

HE'S HUNTED BRUCE BRUCE BANNER'S ALTER EGO TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH ...AND ALWAYS COME AWAY EMPTY-HANDED!

NOW GENERAL "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS IS A TIRED, BROKEN OLD MAN! THE HULK IS A MIS-UNDERSTOOD MONSTER!

THE HUNT GOES ON--WITH NEITHER OF THE TWO MEN I LOVE EVER FINDING *PEACE!*

AT THAT MOMENT, A MILE OR SO UP THE SNOWCLAD MOUNTAINSIDE...

GENERAL ROSS, SLOW DOWN! REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT FULLY RE-COVERED FROM...

FROM MY NERVOUS COL-LAPSE BROUGHT ABOUT BY MY ***FAILURE*** TO END THE MENACE OF THE HULK, SAMSON?

MAYBE SO, BUT THOSE TRACKS PROVE THAT I'M NOT SO DERANGED THAT I ONLY ***THINK*** I SEE MONSTERS EVERYWHERE!

WHAT I SHOT AT EXISTED! I WOUNDED IT, AND NOW IT'S HEADED DOWN THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE--

--TOWARD OUR HUNTING CABIN ON THE SLOPES BELOW!

THE CABIN--? GENERAL, WE'VE GOT TO HEAD THE CREATURE OFF!

YOUR DAUGHTER BETTY IS AWAITING OUR RETURN AT THE CABIN NOW!

BETTY?! HEAVEN HELP ME, I-I'VE ENDANGERED HER AGAIN! UNNH!

GENERAL ROSS!

MEANWHILE, STAGGERING THROUGH THE WHITE WILDERNESS BELOW...

HURT! BLEEDING! MUST FLEE--FIND SHELTER...SOME-WHERE I CAN HIDE UNTIL THE ***OTHERS*** FIND ME!

UNFORTUNATELY, AS WE'VE SEEN, THE CABIN IN WHICH THE CREATURE SEEKS SHELTER IS ALREADY OCCUPIED!

WHA--!

RICK! FRED! WE'VE GOT A VISITOR!!

CRASH!

AND FROM THE WAY HE'S LOSING BLOOD, I'D SAY HE'S NOT AT ALL WELL!

HEY! IN CASE YOU TWO HAVEN'T NOTICED, OUR GUEST IS ALSO NOT AT ALL ***HUMAN!***

A MYSTERY--

--TO BE CONFRONTED AT SOME LATER DATE, AFTER WE HAVE DETERMINED THE FATE OF THE DOWNWARD-PLUNGING HULK!

SNOW HAS PUSHED HULK INTO DEEP PIT!

BUT WALLS OF PIT ARE NOT COVERED WITH SNOW! THEY ARE ROCK!

ROCK THAT WILL NOT SLIP AWAY LIKE SOFT SNOW BENEATH HULK'S FINGERTIPS!

THERE! HULK HAS STOPPED HIMSELF! HE IS NO LONGER FALLING! AND BOTTOM OF PIT IS BELOW HULK'S FEET!

THEN, AFTER THE HULK HAS JUMPED DOWN...

HULK KNOWS HE IS UNDER THE EARTH--INSIDE MOUNTAIN! BUT WHY ISN'T IT DARK HERE?

HUNH? THAT LIGHT!

IT IS BRIGHT LIKE THE SUN! BUT IT IS COLD! HOW CAN IT LIGHT UP CAVERN WITHOUT BEING WARM?

BAH! WHAT DOES HULK CARE ABOUT LIGHT?

ALL HULK WANTS TO DO IS TO GET BACK OUTSIDE...

THE GLITTERING ICE PALACE FILLS THE VAST SUBTERRANEAN CAVERN, ITS MANY-FACETED SPIRES REFRACTING A COLD BLUE LIGHT!

?

IN THE CENTER OF THIS WORLD OF UNEARTHLY BEAUTY, THE MASTER OF THE HALL SITS SUBMERGED IN THOUGHT--

--UNAWARE OF THE MAN-BRUTE BEARING DOWN UPON HIM!

ICE WORLD IS FULL OF ICE STATUES, BUT THERE ON THRONE IS A MAN--ALIVE LIKE THE HULK!

HULK WILL GO TO MAN, TELL HIM HIS WORLD IS TOO COLD FOR THE HULK!

THEN MAN WILL TELL HULK HOW TO GO BACK OUTSIDE WHERE THE **WARM** SUN IS SHINING!

BUT, PLACING THE PONDEROUS HULK AMIDST SLENDER, SHIMMERING ICE SCULPTURES...

SKRAK

...IS LIKE LEADING THAT PROVERBIAL BULL INTO A CHINA SHOP!

STRINKLE!

HUNH? HULK ONLY BUMPED ICE STATUE--AND NOW STATUE FALLS APART!

STATUE WAS PRETTY! HULK DID NOT MEAN TO BREAK IT!

THE SPLINTERING OF HIS STATUARY AWAKENS THE MASTER OF THIS ICY WORLD FROM HIS REVERIE...

WHO DARES INTERRUPT THE SOMBER MEDITATIONS OF **JACK FROST?**

THE ICY FIGURE GAZES UPWARD--

"BUT, IN REALITY, HE IS LOOKING INWARD. THE SIGHT OF THE HULK REMINDING HIM OF HIS VILLAINOUS PAST, FOR JACK FROST HAD ONCE BEEN PROFESSOR GREGOR SHAPANKA, EMPLOYEE OF STARK INDUSTRIES...

...UNTIL HIS GREED LED HIM TO TURN HIS INVENTIVE GENIUS AGAINST TONY STARK. THIS LED, IN TURN, TO BATTLES WITH IRON MAN. FIRST AS **JACK FROST**, AND THEN AGAIN AS **BLIZZARD!**

IN BOTH INCARNATIONS HE WAS DEFEATED! THEN, HIS COLD POWERS--ONCE MECHANICALLY GENERATED BUT NOW A NATURAL PART OF HIM...

...BEGAN TO CHANGE HIM INWARDLY!

HIS DESIRES CEASED TO BE LIKE THOSE OF HIS FELLOW MEN!

HE DECIDED TO FOREGO HUMANITY AND RETIRE TO A WORLD BENEATH THE EARTH WHERE, A STRANGER TO THE SUN, HE COULD CREATE FOR HIMSELF A KINDER CLIMATE THAN THAT WHICH HE HAD LEFT BEHIND!

HULK LIKES ICE-MAN'S WORLD! IT IS PRETTY! PEACEFUL! BUT HULK DOES NOT WANT TO STAY HERE!

NOR SHALL YOU! YOUR PRESENCE RECALLS TO ME TOO MUCH OF MY HATED PAST!

YOU CANNOT STAY, YET NEITHER SHALL YOU LEAVE HERE TO TELL OTHERS OF THE WONDERS WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN!

BEHIND THE JADE GIANT, A STATUE OF ICE SURGES TO LIFE!

FWAK

HUNH? WHO ATTACKS HULK??

IT IS ANOTHER PRETTY ICE STATUE--LIKE THE ONE HULK BROKE BY ACCIDENT! HULK DOES NOT KNOW WHY THIS STATUE WANTS TO FIGHT--

--BUT HULK WILL BREAK THIS STATUE ON PURPOSE!

ICE-WARRIOR FALLS, BUT NOW ICE-GIRL GRABS HOLD OF HULK! WHY?

TO ENFOLD YOU IN MY ICY EMBRACE, WARM ONE!

AND, AS MY MASTER, JACK FROST, COMMANDS, TO PLACE MY FROZEN LIPS ON YOURS--

--IN ORDER TO SEAL YOUR DOOM WITH A KISS OF NUMBING COLD!

AH!

STUNNED INTO IMMOBILITY BY THE ICE-MAIDEN'S EMBRACE, THE INCREDIBLE HULK FEELS HIS BLOOD BEGIN TO FREEZE IN HIS VEINS...

...AS THE ICE-MAID'S BODY CHANGES INTO A BLOCK OF SOLID ICE, ENCASING HIM.!

ICE-GIRL IS GONE, AND HULK IS... COLD?!

HULK HAS BEEN TRICKED! GIRL WAS ONLY ANOTHER ICE-STATUE, SENT TO FOOL AND FREEZE HULK!

SENT BY ICE-MAN! WHY? HULK MEANT NO HARM! HULK ONLY WANTED TO GO BACK TO WHERE IT IS WARM!

I CAME HERE TO DREAM, CREATURE, AND YOU INTERRUPTED MY DREAMS BY TRAMPING BRUTISHLY THROUGH MY WORLD OF FRAGILE BEAUTY!

I THOUGHT I WOULD BE SAFE HERE, AWAY FROM A WARM-BLOODED WORLD WHICH NO LONGER HELD A PLACE FOR ONE SUCH AS I!

BUT I SEE NOW I SHALL NEVER BE SAFE! MY WARM-BLOODED BRETHREN WILL NEVER STOP HOUNDING ME! BUT YOU, HULK, WILL NOT BE AMONG THEM!

FOR HERE SHALL YOU STAY TILL YOUR BLOOD RUNS COLD!

ICE FROM ABOVE AND BELOW GROWS TOGETHER AROUND HULK?

IT CAGES HULK, LIKE AN ANIMAL IN A ZOO.

BUT HULK IS NOT LIKE HELPLESS ANIMALS! HULK CAN BE FREE ANY TIME HE WANTS TO BE!

Y-YOU'RE SHATTERING MY STALACTITE PRISON? IMPOSSIBLE! IT WOULD HAVE HELD EVEN IRON MAN!

HULK IS NOT PUNY METAL AVENGER, ICE-MAN! HULK IS HULK, THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!

THROOM!

HULK DID NOT WANT TO FIGHT YOU! HULK ONLY WANTED TO LEAVE ICE-WORLD IN PEACE! BUT ICE-MAN HAD TO ATTACK HULK! TOO BAD FOR ICE-MAN!

BECAUSE NOW HULK WILL BRING ICE WORLD DOWN AROUND ICE-MAN'S EARS!

STROOM!

N-NO! STOP! EVERYTHING'S SHATTERING FROM THE CATACLYSMIC FORCE OF YOUR BLOWS ON THE CAVERN'S FLOOR!

BUT, PERHAPS THERE IS STILL A CHANCE TO SAVE MY WORLD! IF I CAN FREEZE THE HULK BEFORE HE WREAKS GREATER HAVOC...

ICE-MAN CANNOT FREEZE HULK, BECAUSE THE MORE ICE-MAN FREEZES--

--THE FASTER HULK WILL SMASH!

THE HULK'S SHOUT OF RAGE CAUSES DEAFENING SONIC REPERCUSSIONS THAT ROCK JACK FROST'S ICE-WORLD TO ITS FRAGILE FOUNDATIONS!

NO! STOP! IN THE NAME OF PITY, YOU'RE DESTROYING EVERYTHING!

ICE-MAN SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT BEFORE HE SENT HIS STATUES TO ATTACK HULK!

Y-YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! YOU WERE AN OUTSIDER-- A THREAT TO MY ICE-WORLD!

STUPID ICE-MAN! YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE MADE HULK ***ANGRY!*** YOU JUST MADE HULK MORE OF A THREAT--AND NOW THERE IS ***NO MORE*** ICE-WORLD!

YOU'RE A MONSTER! A MINDLESS, RAMPAGING MONSTER!

THERE? YOU SEE? HULK DID NOT CALL ICE-MAN NAMES-- BUT ICE-MAN CALLS THE HULK NAMES!

YOU ATTACK AND TRY TO KILL HULK-- AND THEN SAY IT IS THE HULK WHO IS THE MONSTER!

HULK WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND PUNY HUMANS! HULK DOES NOT EVEN WANT TO!

LOOK OUT! THE CAVERN CEILING IS COL-LAPSING!

THROOM!

IS THIS ANOTHER OF ICE-MAN'S TRICKS? IS ICE-MAN STUPID ENOUGH TO THINK HE CAN SMASH HULK WITH STILL MORE ICE?!

ICE-MAN WILL HAVE TO LEARN THAT THERE IS NOTHING THE HULK CANNOT POUND HIS WAY THROUGH!

KA-STROOM!

NOTHING!!

I CAN WELL BELIEVE IT, MONSTER! BUT, NO, THIS IS NOT ANOTHER TRAP! MY ICE-WORLD IS DOOMED! MY DREAM IS ENDING!

I ATTACKED YOU UNJUSTLY, MY GREEN-SKINNED INTRUDER, WHEN YOUR ONLY CRIME WAS TO HAVE AWAKENED ME TO THE HARSH REALITY THAT A MAN CANNOT CUT HIMSELF OFF FROM THE WORLD!

GO, HULK! YOU MEANT ME NO HARM!

GO, AND I WILL HOLD BACK THE FINAL COLLAPSE OF MY KINGDOM AS LONG AS I MAY, TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO SURVIVE!

ICE-TUNNEL HAS FORMED AROUND HULK! IS ICE-MAN TRYING TO HOLD HULK BACK?

JACK FROST EXERTS ALL HIS REMAINING POWER TO PROTECT THE GREEN-SKINNED BEHEMOTH...

OBLIVIOUS TO THE AID GIVEN BY HIS FORMER FOE, THE MIGHTY HULK CRASHES THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN'S HEART!

MOUNTAIN CANNOT HOLD HULK! NOTHING CAN!

ONLY ONCE DOES THE HULK LOOK BACK...

SEEING NO SIGN OF HIS ENEMY, THE HULK SOON PUTS ALL MEMORY OF JACK FROST FROM HIS MIND!

ICE-MAN WANTED TO BE ALONE IN HIS ICE-WORLD!

NOW HE WILL BE ALONE FOREVER

WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, THE GREEN-SKINNED GARGANTUA SCALES THE ALMOST-PERPENDICULAR WALLS OF THE TUNNEL THROUGH WHICH HE HAD FALLEN INTO THE ICE-WORLD!

BEHIND HIM, THE CRASHING OF MASSIVE GLACIAL COLUMNS GROWS EVER FAINTER!

AHEAD OF HIM IS LIGHT ...WARM LIGHT!

GRINNING, THE HULK CLIMBS TOWARD THE SUN!

BELOW, IN THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN, THE LAST SPARKLE OF PHOSPHORESCENCE FADES, GIVING WAY TO DARKNESS!

A HAND EMERGES AS IF FROM AN ICY TOMB, GESTURES... AND GROWS STILL!

PERHAPS THE FINAL FAREWELL OF ONE WHO WAS...A DREAMER?

NEXT ISSUE: THE SILVER SURFER! 'NUFF SAID!

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THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

SPECIAL DOUBLE-SIZE COLLECTORS ITEM ISSUE!

GUEST STARRING THE SILVER SURFER!

MILGROM

Caught in the heart of a ***Nuclear Explosion,*** victim of ***Gamma-Radiation*** gone wild, ***Doctor Robert Bruce Banner*** now finds himself transformed in times of stress into seven feet, one thousand pounds of unfettered ***Fury***—the most powerful creature to ever walk the earth—

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INCREDIBLE HULK!®

CHAPTER 1

THE MONSTER!

HULK LIKES THIS PLACE, IT IS QUIET. QUIET IS GOOD.

THE ROLLING FIELDS ARE NOT FOR HIM -- HE IS A MONSTER. THE FARMHOUSES SET LIKE TOYS ABOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE ARE NOT FOR HIM -- HE WOULD DESTROY THEM.

HE IS THE MIGHTIEST MORTAL ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH -- BUT THAT MEANS NOTHING.

NOT ALL HIS SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH CAN WIN HIM A PLACE IN THIS WORLD OF MEN. NOT ALL HIS POWER CAN CONQUER HIS LONLINESS...

...FOR HE IS THE MAN-MONSTER MEN CALL -- THE HULK! THAT IS HIS SORROW. THAT IS HIS CURSE.

A 250TH ISSUE CELEBRATION BROUGHT TO YOU BY...

BILL MANTLO and SAL BUSCEMA

JOHN COSTANZA, *letters*
G. ROUSSOS, *colors*

AL MILGROM, *editor*
JIM SHOOTER *editor-in-chief*

LF146

THERE IS LONGING IN THE HULK'S EYES AS HE LEAVES THE MOUNTAINS FOR THE FERTILE FIELDS.

MAYBE MEN WILL NOT BOTHER HULK HERE.

IF THEY DO, HULK WILL *SMASH* THEM.

THE PEACEFUL, PASTORAL PANORAMA HAS ITS CALMING EFFECT ON THE GREAT GREEN GOLIATH. HIS PULSE RATE SLOWS, ONCE AGAIN TRIGGERING THE AWESOME CHANGE FROM MONSTER... TO MAN!

BUT HULK IS SO TIRED OF SMASHING... OF FIGHTING...

...OF EVERYTHING!

JUST WANT THE NIGHTMARE TO END!

SO THAT I COULD SPEND AN HOUR --A DAY-- GOD IN HEAVEN, A **WEEK**-- WITHOUT BECOMING THE HULK AGAIN!

ONE WEEK AS **BRUCE BANNER!** IS THAT SO MUCH TO ASK??

SUDDENLY..

EEEEEEEEE

SOMEBODY, PLEASE-- **HELP ME!!**

THE CHILD'S STUMBLING-- FALLING!

I'VE GOT TO REACH HER BEFORE THE BULL DOES!

NO! IT'S COMING ON TOO FAST--! GOT TO TRY TO THROW THE GIRL OVER THE FENCE!

ARRGHH!

THEN THERE IS PAIN... FOLLOWED BY DARKNESS!

BRAK

M-MOMMY! MOMMY!

MARY BETH! I'M COMING, HONEY! MOMMY'S COMING!

BLASTED BAD-TEMPERED BULL! IT MUST'VE GONE WILD AT THE SIGHT OF HER RUNNING ACROSS THE FIELD!

OH, MOMMY! I-I WAS JUST WALKING THROUGH THE FIELDS WHEN...

HUSH, MARY BETH! IT'S ALL RIGHT! IT'S OVER! MOMMY'S HERE!

HEE-YAH! SHOO, CRITTER! GET BACK!

THIS FELLER GOT HIT HARD, MRS. MUNDY-- BUT I CAN'T FEEL ANY BROKEN BONES!

WHO IS HE, WALKIN' AROUND HALF NAKED?

SOME HOBO, MORE'N LIKELY!

WHOEVER HE IS, HE SAVED MY LITTLE GIRL'S LIFE--

--AND WE OWE HIM FOR THAT! CARRY HIM TO THE HOUSE, BOYS... GENTLY.

THUS BRUCE BANNER FINDS THAT WHICH, AS THE HULK, HE COULD ONLY LONG FOR--

--ACCEPTANCE!

BUT FOR HOW LONG?

CHAPTER 2

THE EXILE

HE IS OF UNEARTHLY ORIGIN, AN ALIEN-- NORRIN RADD, ONCE OF FAR ZENN-LA!

TO SAVE ZENN-LA FROM THE HUNGER OF THE WORLD-DEVOURING **GALACTUS,** NORRIN RADD OFFERED HIMSELF AS A HERALD! AND SO, GALACTUS TRANSFORMED HIM INTO... **THE SILVER SURFER!**

HE SACRIFICED HIS HUMANITY TO SAVE HIS WORLD!

I DID HOPE TO FIND SURCEASE FROM MY SOUL'S SORROW HERE, AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD...

...BUT TO NO AVAIL!

BUT, WHEN GALACTUS CHOSE TO FEED UPON A PLANET TEEMING WITH LIFE--THEN DID THE SILVER SURFER DEFY HIS MASTER.

HE SAVED THE EARTH ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF BANISHED UPON IT--FOREVER FORBIDDEN TO SOAR THE SPACEWAYS! SUCH IS HIS SORROW! SUCH IS HIS CURSE!

EDITOR'S NOTE: YES... WE **KNOW** THERE AREN'T ANY PENGUINS AT THE NORTH POLE-- BUT SAL DREW 'EM SO CUTE WE COULDN'T **BEAR** TO TAKE 'EM OUT-- AL.

THERE ARE, AMONG HUMANS, THOSE WHO FIND THIS ICY WASTE BEAUTIFUL-- YET THEY MAY LEAVE IT WHENE'ER THEY WISH!

FOR THE SILVER SURFER, IT IS AS MUCH A PRISON--

--AS THE EARTH ITSELF!

WHAT A DESOLATE FATE, FOR ONE WHO HAS SOARED THE VAST VISTAS OF THE SPACEWAYS--

--TO BE TRAPPED ON ONE LONE WORLD!

I AM NOT LIKE THE PRISONER WHO, IN TIME, COMES TO LOVE HIS CELL! I ABHOR MY CONFINEMENT!

BUT FOR THE BARRIER PLACED ABOUT EARTH BY GALACTUS...

KRAK

EH?

THERE IS ONLY ONE SOUND ON THIS WORLD THAT RINGS WITH SUCH GRIM FINALITY!

GUNFIRE!

AND, WHENEVER MAN SHOULDERS HIS WEAPONS--

--THOSE BEINGS WITH WHOM HE SHARES HIS PLANET... DIE!

THE MADNESS OF MANKIND INTRUDES UPON OUR SOLITUDE!

OTHER SOUNDS NOW CARRY ACROSS THE ICE.

THE SOUNDS OF HEAVY CLUBS SILENCING SHRILL SCREAMS.

THE SOUNDS OF MUFFLED CURSING, OF SHARP EXPLOSIONS OF BREATH.

THE SOUNDS OF POWDER EXPLODING IN CHAMBERS, TO PROPEL MISSILES INTO YIELDING FLESH.

THE SOUNDS OF FEMALE HARP SEALS DYING IN VAIN ATTEMPTS TO SAVE THE LIVES OF THEIR WHELPS.

BLAM

THE SOUNDS OF SLAUGHTER.

NOW, A NEW SOUND OVERRIDES THE REST.

THE SHARP WHIRRING OF ROTOR-BLADES--

--A SOUND MADE ONLY BY THAT AIRBORNE INVENTION THE HUMANS CALL... A HELICOPTER!

IT'S THOSE **SAVE-THE-SEAL** GUYS AGAIN, CAP'N--STOPPIN' THE KILL!

TRY TO SCARE 'EM OFF WI' A WARNING SHOT, LAD!

SAVE THE SEALS FUND

IF THEY SPRAY DYE ON THE BABY SEALS' PELTS, THEY'LL RUIN 'EM FOR SALE--

--COSTIN' US A MONTH'S WAGES AN' DOOMIN' OUR FAMILIES T'SLOW STARVATION!

BLASTED ECOLOGISTS CARE LESS ABOUT A MAN'S LIVIN' THAN THEY DO ABOUT DUMB ANIMALS!

ARTIE--NO!

BUT I'LL TEACH 'EM NOT T'ROB US OF OUR LIVELIHOOD!

RUTH!!

KRAK

OHHH!

NO! THAT WHICH I FEARED HAS COME TO PASS!

I ARRIVE TOO LATE TO KEEP THE ICE FROM RUNNING WITH THE BLOOD OF HELPLESS ANIMALS--

--OR THAT OF AN EQUALLY HELPLESS HUMAN!

SHE STILL LIVES-- BUT SHE NEED NOT HAVE BEEN STRUCK DOWN AT ALL! IF ONLY SHE HAD SOUGHT TO ***UNDERSTAND*** THE ACTIONS OF THOSE SHE OPPOSED--!

IF ONLY BOTH SIDES COULD HAVE MET IN REASON--

--INSTEAD OF FACING EACH OTHER IN BLIND OBSTINACY, NEITHER WILLING TO HEAR THE OTHER OUT, NEITHER WILLING TO COMPROMISE!

YOU HUMANS, CAN YOU NOT RESOLVE YOUR DIFFERENCES WITHOUT RE-SORTING TO VIOLENCE?

OR MUST YOU BE ***MADE*** TO BE REASONABLE--

--BY ONE WHO WIELDS THE ***POWER COSMIC***?!

SOME KIND OF FORCE LEAPIN' FROM THAT THING'S EYES-- SHATTERIN' OUR CLUBS!

HE'S A MONSTER! AN INHUMAN MONSTER! DEFEND YOURSELVES, LADS!

HOW, CAP'N? HE'S DRIVIN' US OFF THE ICE--

--AN' BACK TO OUR LONGBOATS, WI' BUT A GESTURE?!

THE WOUNDED GIRL HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THOSE WITH WHOM SHE CAME! THEY WILL TEND TO HER!

SAVE THE SEALS FUND

NOW, LET BOTH SIDES BE GONE!

HOWEVER, AS SOON AS THE SEAL-HUNTERS REACH THEIR SHIP, THEIR FEAR TURNS TO ANGER... AND THEIR THOUGHTS TO VENGEANCE!

I'VE HUNTED IN THESE WATERS A LIFETIME!

I'LL NOT BE DRIVEN OUT BY ANY MAN-- NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL!

FIRE THE HARPOON-CANNON!

THE DEADLY MISSILE ERUPTS FORTH! IT HAS LAID LOW THE MIGHTY LEVIATHAN--THE WHALE--COUNTLESS TIMES BEFORE!

ITS IMPACT DROPS THE SHIMMERING SKY-RIDER!

ULTIMATELY, HOWEVER, IT CANNOT HARM ONE WHO HAS SWEPT UNSCATHED THROUGH METEOR SWARMS...

...ENDURED THE FRIGID DEPTHS OF SPACE--

--AND BRAVED THE MOLTEN HEARTS OF THE STARS!

CAP'N, HE TOOK THE SHAFT FULL-ON... AN' HE'S GETTIN' RIGHT BACK UP!

TELL THE HELMSMAN T'TURN US HARD ABOUT, LAD! HURRY--

--BEFORE THAT SILVER SATAN-SPAWN STRIKES AT US AGAIN!

BUT IT IS NOT AT THE HUNTERS THAT THE SILVER SURFER STRIKES NEXT--

--IT IS, RATHER, AT THE ANCHOR CHAIN THAT MOORS THEIR VESSEL IN THIS SEA OF ICE!

SPRAK

I TOLD YOU TO BEGONE! IF THE SILVER SURFER CANNOT CHANGE YOU--

AT LEAST HE CAN DRIVE YOU FROM HIS SIGHT!

CAP'N, WE--WE'RE FLYIN'! THE SHIP'S *FLYIN'*!!!

NO, HE'S MADE A GIANT WAVE T'SWEEP US UP, LADS--

--AN' PROPEL US FROM THE KILLIN' GROUND!

AGAIN, I AM ALONE! THE HUMANS OF BOTH PARTIES HAVE LEFT OR BEEN DRIVEN AWAY! BUT THE ENTIRE RACE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PERSIST IN ITS BRUTAL WAYS--

--EITHER UNTIL THE DAY COMES WHEN THEY REALIZE THAT MANKIND *CAN* SURVIVE--

--WITHOUT UNNECESSARY SLAUGHTER--

--OR UNTIL THE DAY THEY DESTROY THEIR WORLD TOTALLY, IN ONE LAST OUTBURST OF IMPOTENT RAGE!

SUCH A DAY I DO NOT WISH EVER TO SEE!

YET, SHOULD SUCH A HOLOCAUST OCCUR, SEE IT I *MUST*-- FOR I CAN GO NOWHERE ELSE!

UNLESS, AFTER ALL THESE MONTHS OF MISERY--

--THE BARRIER GALACTUS PLACED AROUND EARTH HAS SOMEHOW WEAKENED--

--ALLOWING THE SILVER SURFER TO ONCE AGAIN REACH THE STARS!

NO! IT IS STILL IN PLACE! NOTHING HAS CHANGED!

BUT FAILURE WILL NOT DETER ME FROM FURTHER ATTEMPTS!

EVEN DEATH IS PREFERABLE TO PERPETUAL IMPRISONMENT UPON THIS WORLD-GONE-MAD!

ARRHH! AGAIN I AM REPULSED!

YET AGAIN WILL I HURL MY BOARD FORWARD, FOR THE PRIZE I SEEK TO GAIN IS THE PRIZE CHERISHED ABOVE ALL...

FREEDOM!

FREEDOM--WITHOUT WHICH THE SILVER SURFER IS BUT A MOCKERY OF HIS OWN EXISTENCE--

--A SKY-RIDER DENIED THE HEAVENS...A STAR-VOYAGER EARTHBOUND!

DO YOU HEAR, GALACTUS? DO YOU HEAR YOUR FORMER HERALD?

I WILL NOT BE STOPPED!

I WILL BE FREE!

FREE!

BUT THE UNSEEN BARRIER WHICH HALTS HIM TIME AND AGAIN--

--WAS SET IN PLACE BY THE GODLIKE BEING WHO CREATED THE SILVER SURFER HIMSELF!

HE IT WAS, WHO INVESTED THE SURFER WITH THE POWER COSMIC--

--YET EVEN THAT POWER PALES BEFORE THE UNIMAGINABLE MIGHT OF... GALACTUS!

THE SILVER SURFER FALLS EARTHWARD, WHILE IN SOME UNKNOWN, UNFATHOMABLE WAY, HIS SHIMMERING SURFBOARD RESPONDS TO HIS MENTAL COMMAND...

...AND SWOOPS DOWN TO KEEP HIM FROM HARM!

TO ME, MY BOARD!

I HAVE FAILED! THE BARRIER STILL STANDS, MOCKING ME WITH THE SIGHT OF THE UNATTAINABLE STARS BEYOND!

ENOUGH! I HAVE ACCOMPLISHED NOTHING!

I CAN BEAR NO MORE!

YET, ALL ELSE PASSES THROUGH UNHINDERED! METEORITES! THE FLOTSAM AND JETSAM OF SPACE!

EVEN MANKIND ROUTINELY TRAVERSES THE BARRIER--

WITH EYES POSSESSED OF SUPRA-NORMAL SIGHT, THE SURFER SEES...

LIGHT RAYS! ENERGY RAYS OF EVERY MAGNITUDE! ALL THESE TRAVERSE THE BARRIER!

ULTRAVIOLET RAYS! X-RAYS! COSMIC RAYS! GAMMA RAYS!

GAMMA RAYS? WHAT HAVOC WOULD *THEY* WREAK WERE THEY TO REACH EARTH'S SURFACE UNFILTERED BY THE ATMOSPHERE?

THEY ARE DEADLY! THEY COULD CHANGE THE VERY GENETIC STRUCTURE OF ANY LIFEFORM THEY TOUCHED!

INDEED! I KNOW OF ONE THEY ALTERED! HE WAS ONCE A MAN, LIKE OTHER MEN--

"--UNTIL HIS ATTEMPT TO HARNESS SUCH GAMMA RAYS INTO A BOMB WENT AWRY... AND CHANGED HIM INTO A RAGING MAN-MONSTER!

THE HULK!

*"FAR MORE UNREASONING THAN EVEN HIS FELLOW MAN, THE BRUTE SOUGHT TO DESTROY ME! *

*SEE TALES TO ASTONISH #93
--ARCHIVIST AL.

"IN THE END, I WAS FORCED TO MEET VIOLENCE WITH VIOLENCE... SUBDUING THE MIGHTY HULK!"

USING A MENTAL BEAM OF PUREST COSMIC ENERGY, I SHALL PROBE THE INNERMOST RECESSES OF HIS SLUMBERING BRAIN!

ALREADY AN IMAGE BEGINS TO FORM--!

"SO, IN SAVING A WAYWARD YOUTH, DR. BRUCE BANNER WAS HIMSELF EXPOSED TO A POWERFUL GAMMA RAY EXPLOSION--

"--AND IT IS THAT GAMMA RAY INFUSION WHICH, AT TIMES OF STRESS, TRANSFORMS HIM INTO THE RAGING, RAMPAGING HULK! A CREATURE WHOSE STRENGTH --

"--INCREASES GEOMETRICALLY AS HIS AWESOME ANGER GROWS!"

ANGER INTO STRENGTH? MY RAGE AT GALACTUS' BARRIER KNOWS NO BOUNDS!

IF AN INFUSION OF GAMMA RAYS COULD TURN THAT RAGE TO UNLIMITED POWER--?!

THEN NOTHING COULD HOLD ME ON EARTH! ***NOTHING!***

I WILL SEEK OUT THE ONE MAN WHO WILL KNOW HOW TO HELP ME... A MAN WHOSE TORMENT MIRRORS MY OWN! HE ***WILL*** HELP ME--

--AND, IN EXCHANGE, I WILL FREE ***BRUCE BANNER*** FOREVER FROM THE CURSE THAT IS... THE ***HULK!***

CHAPTER 3

THE QUEST!

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT THE SPACE-SCANNING SIGHT OF THE SILVER SURFER IS CAPABLE OF DISCERNING A GRAIN OF SAND UNTOLD GALAXIES AWAY!

IF SO, THEN HOW MUCH EASIER TO LOCATE A SINGLE HUMAN AMIDST THE MANY RACES OF THE EARTH?

ESPECIALLY WHEN THE ONE HE SEEKS MAY BE IDENTIFIED BY A FAINT BUT EVER-PRESENT GAMMA RAY RESIDUE!

MANY ARE THE EARTHLY SUPER-HUMANS WHO MARVEL AT HIS PASSING AS HE CIRCUMNAVIGATES THE GLOBE! SOME HE KNOWS-- SOME HE HAS NEVER SEEN! *

THE SILVER SURFER IGNORES THEM ALL!

*BUT FEAR NOT, TRUE BELIEVER! **YOU** WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO MEET THE **COLLECTIVE MAN,** THE SOVIET **SUPER-SOLDIERS, SABRA,** THE **ARABIAN KNIGHT** AND **CAPTAIN BRITAIN** IN FUTURE ISSUES OF THIS AND OTHER MARVEL MAGS!--AL.

AT LAST, HAVING SOARED THE SOLAR CURRENTS OVER OCEANS AND CONTINENTS ALIKE -- THE UNEARTHLY VISION OF THE SILVER SKY-RIDER SPIES THAT WHICH HE SEEKS!

A GAMMA RAY AURA, SO FAINT THAT NO OTHER EYES SAVE MINE COULD HAVE DETECTED IT!

AN END TO BOTH OUR CURSES!

THE SILVER SURFER SOARS ON!

MEANWHILE, ON A SMALL FARM STRADDLING THE COLORADO - NEW MEXICO STATE LINE...

WELL, HELLO, MARY BETH! WHY ARE YOU IN SUCH A HURRY?

I CAME TO FIND YOU, BRUCE--

-- AND TO INVITE YOU TO OUR SQUARE DANCE TONIGHT! MOMMY SAYS THE TOWNSPEOPLE ALL WANT TO MEET YOU!

A DANCE? I'D LIKE THAT--

--IF YOU'LL BE MY PARTNER!

YOU BET! LET'S GO TELL MOMMY!

I HEARD! BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU FEEL WELL ENOUGH, BRUCE?

I'M A LITTLE SORE-- ESPECIALLY WHERE I SIT-- BUT OTHERWISE THE BULL'S CHARGE LEFT NO ILL EFFECTS.

AND I'D LOVE TO MEET YOUR FRIENDS, CLARE. IN THE WEEKS SINCE I'VE BEEN HERE-- RECUPERATING AND WORKING FOR YOU-- I'VE COME TO FEEL LIKE I BELONG... LIKE I'VE FINALLY FOUND A HOME.

AND A FAMILY, IF YOU'D LIKE. MARY BETH AND I HAVE BEEN ALONE--

-- SINCE A MYSTERIOUS "PLAGUE" SWEPT OUT FROM THAT RESEARCH INSTALLATION, KILLING MY HUSBAND AND MOST OF THE TOWN OF *LIBERTY!* WE'VE REBUILT OUR LIVES SINCE THEN--

--BUT IT HASN'T BEEN EASY LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF *TRANQUILITY BASE!*

I'VE WONDERED ABOUT THAT OLD RUIN. WHAT WENT ON THERE?

NO ONE KNOWS, NO ONE ***WANTS*** TO KNOW.

BRUCE, PROMISE ME YOU'LL NEVER GO THERE!

WHY SHOULD I, CLARE? ALL I WANT IS TO BE HERE--WITH YOU AND MARY BETH. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS I'M AT PEACE WITH MYSELF.

AND SOMETHING ABOUT HAVING PEOPLE WHO DEPEND UPON ME SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED TO KEEP MY DEADLY ANGER IN CHECK! MAYBE ***THIS*** IS WHAT I NEEDED ALL ALONG--

--TO KEEP FROM BECOMING THE HULK!

ARE YOU TWO GONNA STAND AROUND HERE GETTIN' ALL MUSHY--OR ARE YOU COMIN' TO THE PARTY?

IT'S A TOUGH DECISION, LITTLE LADY, BUT THE PARTY WINS OUT... FOR NOW!

LEAD THE WAY, HONEY!

SOON...

NOW DON'T BE NERVOUS, BRUCE. YOU'RE GOING TO BE KIND OF ON EXHIBIT TONIGHT. "CLARE'S BEAU," THEY'LL CALL YOU.

IF IT'S TRUE, CLARE, IT'S FINE WITH ME.

IT ***IS*** TRUE, BRUCE--IF YOU WANT IT TO BE.

WELL, LADIES AN' GENTS, WE'RE HERE TO SQUARE DANCE, SO GRAB YOUR PARTNERS!

--AN' DO-SI-DO! STEP TO THE MUSIC NOW, DON'T BE SLOW!

SO THAT'S CLARE'S BEAU!

MIGHTY HANDSOME, IF'N YOU ASK ME.

THEY MAKE A DANDY COUPLE.

COME HERE, MARY BETH! SINCE THE NEIGHBORS HAVE PRACTICALLY MARRIED YOUR MOMMY AND ME--

--WE MIGHT AS WELL DANCE AS A FAMILY!

SO IT GOES, ON INTO THE NIGHT--

--UNTIL BRUCE BANNER IS REMINDED THAT HIS STOMACH IS LESS FULL THAN HIS HEART!

YOU HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE BREAKFAST, BRUCE. I'LL GO GET YOU SOMETHING.

THANKS, CLARE.

I WAS ALWAYS AFRAID TO LOVE BEFORE--AFRAID OF WHAT THE HULK MIGHT DO TO THOSE I CARED FOR! BUT NOW I FEEL ALMOST AS IF I CAN *CONTROL* THE DARK SIDE OF MY EGO--

--AND NOTHING CAN MAKE ME UNLEASH IT AGAIN!

EH?

UNSEEN BY THE OTHER REVELERS, A SILVER LIGHT SLASHES ACROSS THE SKY!

LIKE A STAR--FALLING FROM THE HEAVENS!

IT LANDED IN THE FIELDS BEYOND!

IT COULDN'T BE A COMET OR A METEORITE--WE WOULD HAVE FELT THE IMPACT!

BUT IF NOT THAT, THEN... WHAT??

GREETINGS, BRUCE BANNER.

MY QUEST HAS LED ME TO YOU.

WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME? WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME?

I AM... THE *SILVER SURFER.*

ALTHOUGH *YOU* MAY NOT REMEMBER IT-- YOUR ALTER-EGO AND I HAVE MET IN THE PAST.

I SEEK THAT WHICH YOU ALONE OF ALL HUMANS POSSESS-- THE PEERLESS *POWER* OF THE BRUTE MEN CALL... THE *HULK!*

THE HULK?! YOU MUST BE MAD!

THE HULK'S POWER IS A CURSE I WOULDN'T WISH ON THE DEVIL!

I DIDN'T WANT IT-- DIDN'T ASK FOR IT! YET NEITHER CAN I GIVE IT AWAY!

IT'S *MY* CURSE, GOD HELP ME-- AND MINE ALONE!

YOU SEE? I'D HOPED TO CONTROL IT HERE!

BUT YOUR COMING HAS STARTED IT ALL OVER AGAIN!

HEARTBEAT SPEEDING UP! PULSE POUNDING! I CAN'T STOP--

--THE *CHANGE!*

FROM PUNY BANNER--

--TO THE STRONGEST ONE OF ALL!

THE HULK!

ALTHOUGH I HAVE WITNESSED WONDERS WITHOUT END IN THE UNBOUNDED VASTNESS OF SPACE--

--STILL AM I AMAZED BY SO STAGGERING A TRANSFORMATION AS THIS!

PUNY BANNER HAS FLED, RUN AWAY! HE WAS AFRAID OF YOU!

BUT THE HULK IS AFRAID OF NOTHING!

YOU ARE AS POWERFUL AND SAVAGE AS ON OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER--

--AND IT IS THAT VERY SAVAGE STRENGTH-- THE ABILITY TO GROW STRONGER AS YOU GROW ANGRIER-- THAT THE SILVER SURFER NEEDS!

YOU ARE RIGHT! HULK *IS* ANGRY!

AND WHAT MAKES HULK MAD--HULK ***SMASHES!!***

SPLOW

YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE HULK AGAIN! FIRST HULK WILL BREAK BOARD--AND THEN HULK WILL BREAK YOU!

I HAVE SEEN ENOUGH! YOU ARE STRONGER THAN EVER!

NOW RELINQUISH YOUR HOLD UPON MY BOARD!

DID YOU NOT HEAR ME? I SAID-- RELEASE IT!

ZAK

ARRGH!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? YOU ARE CHANGING HULK!

SENDING HULK AWAY!

BRINGING BACK PUNY BANNER!

IT'S TRUE! I'M MYSELF AGAIN! YOU DID THIS--WITH A WAVE OF YOUR HAND!!

AYE, WITH THE MEREST BURST OF MY POWER COSMIC.

YOU ARE *CURED*, BRUCE BANNER. THE GAMMA RADIATION HAS BEEN PURGED FROM YOUR CELLS.

YOU WILL NEVER BECOME THE HULK AGAIN.

I-I BELIEVE YOU--SOMEHOW! BUT *WHY* DID YOU CURE ME?

BECAUSE I TOO KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN OUTCAST--AND BECAUSE I CRAVE A CURE THAT ONLY *YOU* CAN SUPPLY!

I AM AN EXILE ON EARTH--HELD HERE FOREVER BY A BARRIER THROUGH WHICH I CANNOT PASS!

I RAGE AGAINST IT, BUT UNLESS MY RAGE CAN BE TURNED TO POWER, I SHALL NEVER BE FREE!

Y-YOU WANT ME TO INFUSE YOU WITH GAMMA RAYS SO THAT, LIKE THE HULK, YOU'LL GET STRONGER AS YOU GET ANGRIER?! I-I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO IT--BUT I NEED COMPUTERS--ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY!

I SENSE THAT WHICH YOU NEED IN YONDER RUINS! I GO THERE NOW, TO PREPARE THEM!

TRANQUILITY BASE! YES, OF COURSE!

THE SURFER'S GONE--BUT I KNOW HE EXPECTS ME TO FOLLOW HIM!

AND I WILL! HE'S FREED ME FROM THE CURSE OF THE HULK! FOR THIS I OWE HIM MORE THAN MY LIFE!

BUT NOW I'VE GOT TO RETURN TO THE PARTY WITHOUT AROUSING SUSPICION!

THE CLOTHES ON THIS SCARE-CROW AREN'T SASSON--

--BUT THEY'LL HAVE TO DO!

SHORTLY...

BRUCE, WHAT ON EARTH--?!

I, ER, THOUGHT MARY BETH WOULD LIKE TO CELEBRATE AN EARLY HALLOWEEN!

MOMMY, LET'S ALL DRESS UP LIKE BRUCE!

IT'D BE FUN!

I-I HATE TO LIE TO THEM--BUT WHAT CHOICE DO I HAVE? EVEN IF I NEVER BECOME THE HULK AGAIN, MY PAST WILL ALWAYS CLOUD MY FUTURE!

I WANT THIS TO BE A CLEAN START! AS SOON AS I'VE HELPED THE SURFER--

--I'LL BURY ALL MEMORY OF THE HULK FOREVERMORE!

CHAPTER 4

THE POWER

LATER THAT EVENING, AFTER THE FESTIVITIES HAVE ENDED, BRUCE BANNER CREEPS FROM THE FARMHOUSE TO KEEP A FATEFUL, CLANDESTINE RENDEZVOUS!

THE NIGHT WANES, DR. BANNER-- GAMMA ACTIVITY IN THE HEAVENS IS AT ITS PEAK. ALL IS IN READINESS HERE AT TRANQUILITY BASE. I HAVE REACTIVATED THE MACHINERY WITH A SMALL COSMIC CHARGE, BUT IT REQUIRES YOUR MIND AND SKILLS TO MAKE IT FUNCTION.

I-I GOT AWAY AS SOON AS I COULD, THINKING I'D HAVE TO ASSEMBLE THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT FROM SCRATCH!

BUT YOU--YOU'VE WROUGHT A MIRACLE--TAKEN A WEED-GROWN RUIN AND BROUGHT IT HUMMING TO MECHANICAL LIFE! IF YOU ARE CAPABLE OF ***THIS***, DO YOU REALLY ***NEED*** ME?

YES, YOUR MIND ALONE UNDERSTANDS THE HARNESSING OF GAMMA RADIATION.

I POSSESS THE POWER COSMIC, YES-- BUT STILL I CANNOT ESCAPE THIS PRISON CALLED EARTH!

FOR GALACTUS-- HE WHO WAS MY MASTER-- STRIPPED ME OF MY SPACE-TIME POWERS--

--AND SET A BARRIER ABOUT YOUR EARTH THROUGH WHICH I MAY NOT PASS!

AND YOU WANT TO PIERCE THAT BARRIER--

--BY ADDING TO YOUR OWN, UNIMAGINABLE MIGHT THE SHEER RAW POWER OF THE GAMMA RADIATION, A POWER THAT WOULD INCREASE YOUR STRENGTH IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE RAGE YOU FEEL?

YES! FOR TOO LONG HAVE I REMAINED IN EXILE-- DENIED THE STARS! I WOULD SEE MY HOME AGAIN--

--AND MY BELOVED SHALLA BAL!

HOME! LOVED ONES! THE SURFER SEEKS ONLY THAT HAPPINESS WHICH, BY RIGHTS, BELONGS TO EVERY MAN-- HAPPINESS WHICH WAS DENIED *ME* UNTIL HE CURED ME OF BECOMING THE HULK!

HELPING HIM GAIN HIS FREEDOM IS THE *LEAST* I CAN DO TO REPAY HIM!

I... THINK I CAN INVEST YOU WITH THE POWER YOU NEED, SURFER--BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY.

MUCH OF THIS MACHINERY WILL NEED TO BE ADAPTED TO OUR PURPOSES.

SAY NO MORE. WITH A SIMPLE COSMIC PROBE I WILL OPEN UP YOUR MIND--

-- SEEING THEREIN THAT WHICH MUST BE DONE!

AND, FOR THE SILVER SURFER, THAT WHICH IS ONCE UNDER-STOOD... *IS!*

T-THE COMPUTERS-- DISASSEMBLING THEMSELVES!

FLYING INTO THE AIR AND REASSEMBLING--!

INTO THAT DEVICE WHOSE DESIGN I SAW REVEALED WITHIN YOUR BRAIN!

YES! YOU'VE CONSTRUCTED A ***GAMMA RAY INFUSER!*** IT COULD BE NOTHING ELSE!

YOU WERE ITS ARCHITECT, DR. BANNER. I MERELY TOOK YOUR CONCEPTION--

--AND MADE IT ***REALITY!***

BUT I REQUIRE YOUR AID FOR ONE MORE TASK!

YOU MUST OPERATE THE DELICATE CONTROLS OF THE INFUSER--

FOR WHILE IT IS TRAINED ON ME...I MAY NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ACTIONS!

THE INFUSER DRAWS GAMMA RAYS FROM SPACE!

THEN, MODIFYING THEM SO THAT THEY'LL COMBINE WITH YOUR UNIQUE GENETIC STRUCTURE--

--IT WILL BOMBARD YOU WITH A MASSIVE DOSE OF GAMMA RADIATION, UNTIL IT PERMEATES YOUR EVERY CELL!

AS *MY* ANGER WAS CONVERTED TO RAW POWER WHENEVER I BECAME THE HULK, SO, TOO WILL *YOURS* BE!

UNTIL NOT EVEN THE SPACE-TIME BARRIER OF GALACTUS CAN WITHSTAND YOUR RAGE!

*BUT BRUCE BANNER HAS OVERLOOKED ONE SMALL FACT-- HE WAS A **MAN** BEFORE BECOMING THE HULK... WHEREAS THE SURFER POSSESSES THE POWER COSMIC!*

*WILL NOT ADDITIONAL POWER MAKE HIM LIKE UNTO AN ANGRY **GOD**?*

AT THE FARM...

MOMMY, I CAN'T SLEEP! THOSE LIGHTS SCARE ME!

LIGHTS?

OH! OH, NO--NOT TRANQUILITY BASE! NOT AGAIN!

CLUTCHING HER CHILD TO HER, CLARE RUSHES DOWN THE HALL TO...

BRUCE! WAKE UP, WE'VE GOT TO--

BRUCE?

ELSEWHERE IN THE VALLEY...

CHARLIE, SOMEONE'S INSIDE THE OLD RUIN!

ON THE LOCAL HIGHWAY...

GET ON THE C.B., ARCH! SPREAD THE NEWS!

I'VE HAD NIGHTMARES ABOUT THAT PLACE STARTING UP AGAIN--

--AND NOW THEY'RE COMING TRUE!

AND IN THE TOWN OF LIBERTY, NEW MEXICO...

FLARE

FLOYD! EARL! LOOK!

A LIGHT--LIKE A FIRE OUT OF HADES.

AS THE TOWNSPEOPLE STARE IN FEAR AND LOATHING, THE HELLISH GLOW VANISHES!

WHY HAVE YOU STOPPED THE GAMMA BOMBARDMENT?

YOU WERE ABSORBING TOO MUCH TOO QUICKLY! YOUR CELL STRUCTURE MUST ADJUST SLOWLY TO THE RAYS--

--OR THEY MAY ALTER YOUR CELLULAR BALANCE!

HOW CAN ANY PROCESS WHICH WOULD FREE ME FROM THIS INSANE WORLD PROCEED TOO QUICKLY?!

CAN YOU NOT UNDERSTAND?

I WISH MY IMPRISONMENT TO END--

--NOW!

INFUSED WITH GAMMA RADIATION, THE SILVER SURFER IS POSSESSED OF AN IRRATIONAL RAGE--

--A RAGE HE VENTS ON THE INNOCENT COUNTRYSIDE!

SOME KIND OF DEMON SWOOPING DOWN FROM THE HILLS!

FROM TRANQUILITY BASE, YOU MEAN!

NOTHING IS SAFE FROM HIS WRATH!

ESPECIALLY NOT THE WORKS OF MAN!

THROUGHOUT THE VALLEY, MEN ARM THEMSELVES! THEY HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN THE TERROR THAT SWEPT OUT OF TRANQUILITY BASE TO KILL THEIR FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES!

THEY WILL NOT LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!

THE FEAR SPREADS LIKE WILDFIRE, FROM FARM TO FARM...

ROUSE YOUR MAN, CLARE! WE'RE GOING TO SHUT DOWN THAT DEVIL-BASE FOR GOOD!

BUT BRUCE ISN'T HERE!

WHICH LEADS CLARE TO THE QUESTION..., WHERE *IS* THE MAN SHE LOVES??

TRANQUILITY BASE? NO, HE WOULDN'T!

HE PROMISED ME HE WOULD NEVER GO THERE!!

MOMMY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

MOMMY!

MEANWHILE, BACK AT TRANQUILITY BASE...

SURFER!

WOULD YOU STILL ADMONISH ME TO PATIENCE-- NOW THAT YOU HAVE SEEN THE DEPTHS OF MY ANGUISH... THE SCOPE OF MY ANGER?

WHAT I WARNED HIM MIGHT HAPPEN IS ALREADY COMING TO PASS!

THE GAMMA INFUSION IS AFFECTING HIS MIND -- MAKING HIM REACT OBSESSIVELY... CALLOUSLY!

PERHAPS IF HE VENTS HIS ANGER ON THE SPACE-TIME BARRIER, HE'LL LEAVE THE VALLEY IN PEACE!

THE SWITCH IS THROWN! GAMMA RAYS AGAIN BOMBARD THE SILVER SKY-RIDER!

CONTINUE! I MUST FEEL THE GAMMA RAYS SEETHING WITHIN ME!

POWER... PULSING, POUNDING IN EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING!

POWER ENOUGH TO REND A WORLD ASUNDER--

--OR TO BE FREE OF ONE FOREVER!

HURTLING HEAVENWARD ON HIS SLEEK SILVER SURF-BOARD, THE GAMMA RAY-INFUSED SURFER STRIKES THE INVISIBLE BARRIER--AND IS REPULSED!

AGAIN I AM DENIED THE STARS! AGAIN I AM DRIVEN BACK!

I NEED MORE POWER! MORE!

DO YOU HEAR? MORE! TRAIN THE GAMMA RAY INFUSER UPON ME! FEED THE POWER TO ME--

--EVEN AS I AGAIN ASSAULT THE ACCURSED BARRIER

Y-YES, I WILL!

HIS EYES ARE GROWING GREEN-- SEETHING WITH RAGE! HE GROWS ANGRIER-- MORE SAVAGE BY THE SECOND!

I DARE NOT REFUSE HIM!

NOR WOULD I WANT TO WHILE THE DEBT I OWE HIM REMAINS UNPAID!

AGAIN THE GREEN GAMMA GLOW SURROUNDS THE SILVER SURFER--

--AND AGAIN HE SOARS SKYWARD--

--GROWING ANGRIER AT THE THOUGHT OF HIS IMPRISONMENT--GROWING STRONGER AS HIS RAGE CONSUMES ALL ELSE!

WITNESS--A GOD GONE MAD!

AND, IF SUCH POWER CAN DRIVE A DEITY TO MADNESS... WHAT CAN THE MERE FEAR OF POWER DO TO THOSE MOLDED OF BUT COMMON CLAY?

TO THE RUINS, BOYS!

STOP THE DEMON FORCES BEFORE THEY KILL US ALL!

OH, BRUCE-- PLEASE DON'T BE HERE!

THERE! IT'S THE STRANGER! CLARE'S BEAU!

BRUCE!

WE TEND TO HIM--TAKE HIM INTO OUR COMMUNITY-- AND THIS IS HOW HE REPAYS US!

CLARE? THE NEIGHBORS? WAIT! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!

WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE PLAYING WITH FORCES THAT CAN DESTROY US ALL, MISTER!

THERE! LOOK TO THE STARS!

DEMON-FIRE!

THE SAME GREEN GLOW THAT BLASTED MY SILO!

AND MY BARN!

IT CHARRED MY FIELDS!

WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S GETTING ITS POWER FROM THESE INFERNAL MACHINES!

WE CAN DESTROY THE GLOW BY DESTROYING THEM!

NO! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

BRUCE, THEY DO KNOW!

THIS PLACE HAS BROUGHT PAIN ENOUGH DOWN ON US ALL! IT'S GOT TO BE DESTROYED!

STRAK!

THE GAMMA INFUSER IS DAMAGED--

--AND THE HEAVEN-DIRECTED STREAM OF GAMMA RAYS IS IMMEDIATELY CUT OFF--

--DEPRIVING AN ENRAGED SILVER SURFER OF HIS ADDED POWER!

WHO DARES--?!

THE HUMANS! BUT IF THEY SEEK TO PROLONG MY EXILE, THEN THEY SHALL PAY FOR THEIR PRESUMPTION!

STARS OF SIRIUS, HOW THEY SHALL PAY!!

BELOW...

YOU FOOLS! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE! THE INFUSER WAS DESIGNED TO FOCUS GAMMA RAYS IN A CONTROLLED STREAM--

BUT YOU'VE BREACHED ITS SHIELDING!

RUN! GET OUT-- WHILE I TRY TO CUT OFF THE ESCAPING RADIATION!

IT IS NOT AN ACT OF CONSCIOUS HEROISM.

IT SIMPLY MUST BE DONE-- AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE TO DO IT!

STILL, BRUCE BANNER MUST FEEL A MOMENTARY SURGE OF TERROR, FOR HE KNOWS WHAT EXPOSURE TO SUCH A MASSIVE DOSE OF GAMMA RAYS HAS DONE TO HIM IN THE PAST!

LORD HELP HIM... HE KNOWS!

BRUCE--??

G-GET OUT... WHILE YOU STILL CAN!

PLEASE, CLARE! RUN!

I-I DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE ME LIKE... THIS!

THE TOWNSPEOPLE FLEE FROM A TRANSFORMATION THAT HAS TERRIFIED BRAVER MEN THAN THEMSELVES!

BUT THERE IS ONE WHO DOES NOT RUN--ONE WHO STANDS ROOTED, NOT SO MUCH BY FEAR, BUT BY THE SOUL-NUMBING KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT SHE HAS... LOST!

BRUCE--?

THERE IS NO MORE BRUCE! PUNY BANNER IS GONE! NOW THERE IS ONLY--

--THE HULK!

YOU ARE FORGETTING, MONSTER-- THERE IS ALSO THE SILVER SURFER! AND, IF IT WAS YOU WHO DESTROYED THE GAMMA INFUSER, ROBBING ME OF ITS POWER--

--THEN IT SHALL BE YOU WHO SERVES AS THE INSTRUMENT OF MY ESCAPE FROM THIS MADHOUSE OF A WORLD!

IT TAKES LESS THAN A HEARTBEAT... AND THEN THEY ARE BEYOND SIGHT!

A LONELY WOMAN WATCHES AS THEY VANISH IN THE NIGHT--

--KNOWING THAT BRUCE BANNER HAS GONE OUT OF HER LIFE... FOREVER!

LET GO OF HULK, OR HULK WILL SMASH YOU!

YOU WILL DO NOTHING--

--EXCEPT SERVE AS A SOURCE OF POWER!

HULK SERVES NO ONE! HE IS NOT A SLAVE!

BUT YOU ARE A RECEPTACLE OF GAMMA RADIATION--

--WHICH, ADDED TO THAT WHICH I HAVE ALREADY ABSORBED, WILL GIVE ME THE POWER I NEED TO SMASH THROUGH GALACTUS' BARRIER!

HULK KNOWS ALL ABOUT SMASHING! WATCH, AND THE HULK WILL SMASH YOU!

BESTIAL BRUTE! ALL I WANT FROM YOU--

--IS THE GAMMA RADIATION FROM WHICH YOU DERIVE YOUR POWER!

ARRGH! YOU STOPPED THE HULK?! NO ONE HAS EVER DONE THAT BEFORE!

NO ONE HAS EVER POSSESSED THE POWER OF THE SILVER SURFER!

NOW, AS I DRAW THE GAMMA RADIATION FROM YOUR BODY INTO MY OWN--

--INCREASING THE LEVEL ALREADY INFUSED IN ME BY BANNER'S DEVICE--

--YOU BECOME BEREFT OF POWER--

--WHILE I POSSESS THE POWER COSMIC IN FULL MEASURE...

AND THE SAVAGE STRENGTH OF THE MIGHTY HULK AS WELL!

STRENGTH WHICH INCREASES WITH RAGE-- AND THE RAGE OF THE SILVER SURFER KNOWS NO BOUNDS!

AGAIN THE COSMIC EXILE HURLS HIMSELF AGAINST THE UNSEEN BARRIER!

BUT THIS TIME NOTHING CAN CONTAIN HIM!

NOTHING CAN BAR HIS WAY!

I AM FREE! BY ALL THE STARS THAT SHINE--

--THE SILVER SURFER IS FREE!

WHILE, DRAINED OF THE HULK'S POWER--

--BRUCE BANNER FALLS EARTHWARD!

A FACT WHICH GOES UNNOTICED BY THE LIBERATED SKY-RIDER!

FREE! TO SAIL THE SOLAR WINDS -- TO SOAR IN HARMONY WITH THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES!

FREE TO SHAPE MY OWN DESTINY -- TO SOJOURN UNHINDERED FROM STAR TO FARTHEST STAR!

TO RETURN TO ZENN-LA, AND THERE CLAIM THE HAND OF MY BELOVED --

-- SHALLA BAL!

BUT WHAT OF THE EARTHMAN, HE WHOSE SACRIFICE MADE MY FREEDOM POSSIBLE?

HE DID CLING TO MY BOARD -- BUT HE DOES SO NO LONGER!

OF COURSE! HE COULD NOT RETAIN HIS HOLD AT THE SPEEDS I ATTAINED TO CRASH THE BARRIER!

NOR COULD HE HAVE SURVIVED IN THE VACUUM OF SPACE!

HE FALLS TO HIS DOOM --

--AND THERE IS NONE TO SAVE HIM, FOR THE GAMMA RAYS THAT EMPOWERED ME TO BREAK THROUGH GALACTUS' BARRIER ARE EXPENDED!

IF I PASS BACK INTO EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE TO RESCUE THE HUMAN, I WILL BECOME IMPRISONED AGAIN!

CURSE YOU, GALACTUS! WHEN YOU CREATED THE SILVER SURFER --

-- COULD YOU NOT HAVE WROUGHT HIM WITHOUT A CONSCIENCE?

COULD YOU NOT HAVE MADE HIM WITHOUT A SOUL??

DIVING BACK THROUGH THE BARRIER --

-- THE SILVER SURFER GRASPS HOLD OF THE PLUMMETING BRUCE BANNER!

BANNER IS WEAKENED NEAR UNTO DEATH BY HIS ORDEAL!

IF I AM TO SAVE HIM, I HAVE BUT ONE RECOURSE!

I MUST RECHANNEL THE GAMMA RADIATION WHICH YET LINGERS WITHIN ME, BACK INTO HIS FRAIL FORM --

-- IN THE HOPE IT WILL REKINDLE THE SPARK OF LIFE!

SOON, ON AN ISOLATED PEAK SOMEWHERE IN NEW MEXICO...

IT IS DONE! THE HUMAN LIVES! I COULD NEVER HAVE ENJOYED MY FREEDOM, HAD HIS DEATH BEEN ON MY HANDS!

THE HATED POWER OF THE HULK IS HIS AGAIN, ALSO!

CURSED ARE WE BOTH, BRUCE BANNER!

FOR A FLEETING INSTANT IT SEEMED WE HAD ATTAINED FREEDOM FROM THESE CURSES...BUT SUCH WAS NOT TO BE!

I COULD AGAIN CURE YOU, AND YET...

YOU HAD FORGED A LIFE FOR YOURSELF, COME TO GRIPS WITH YOUR CURSE AND ATTAINED INNER PEACE-- UNTIL MY COMING SHATTERED IT! I NEVER SHOULD HAVE MEDDLED IN YOUR AFFAIRS... I SHALL NOT INTERFERE WITH YOU AGAIN!

I WISH I HAD NEVER SOUGHT YOU OUT, DR. BANNER!

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR BETTER FOR US BOTH!

AS THE SILVER SURFER DEPARTS, WITH NEVER A BACKWARD GLANCE...

WHAT HAPPENED--? WHERE--? I'M NOT GREEN-- NOT THE HULK!

I'M MYSELF AGAIN!

BUT I'M NOT CURED! I CAN FEEL THE GAMMA RAYS LIKE A TURBULENCE AT THE CENTER OF MY SOUL!

I'M STILL THE HULK! STILL A MONSTER!

THE SURFER! HE-HE SAID HE COULD CURE ME...

BUT NOW HE'S GONE--

--AFTER SMASHING ALL MY HOPES FOR HAPPINESS... MY ONE LAST CHANCE FOR PEACE!

HOW MUCH BETTER NEVER TO HAVE KNOWN HAPPINESS--

--THAN TO FIND IT... ONLY TO LOSE IT AGAIN... FOREVER!

NEXT ISSUE: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... THE 3-D MAN?

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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE 3-D MAN?

HE IS HUNTED, HAUNTED AND HOUNDED BY THE FEAR--THE FEAR OF BEING RECOGNIZED AS THE MAN WHO BECOMES THE HULK! BRUCE BANNER HAD HOPED TO HIDE HIMSELF IN ANOTHER MAN'S CLOTHING AND MOVE ON, UNNOTICED!

UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S NEVER AS EASY AS THAT!

IT'S THE MONSTER! HE'S HERE!

WE GOTTA GET AWAY BEFORE THE HULK KILLS US ALL!

THOSE KIDS -- THEY MUST HAVE SEEN ME! BUT HOW COULD THEY KNOW THAT *I* AM THE ***HULK?*** ***HOW?!***

AS BRUCE BANNER PREPARES TO FLEE, A WOMAN'S VOICE CUTS ACROSS THE DIN OF THE BACKYARD!

HAL, JR., COULD YOU PLEASE PLAY A LITTLE MORE QUIETLY?!

AW, MOM-- HOW ARE WE GONNA STOP THE HULK BY BEING QUIET?

HAL, JR.'S GOT A POINT THERE, PEG-- YOU CAN'T KILL A MONSTER BY WHISPERING!

BUT THEIR RACKET IS DRIVING THE POOR DOG CRAZY!

A GAME-- THEY'RE ONLY PLAYING SOME KIND OF "HUNT-THE-HULK" GAME!

HAVE I REACHED THE POINT WHERE I FEAR EVEN THE PLAYFUL CRIES OF CHILDREN?

ROWF ROWF ROWF

THOSE CAST-OFF TENNIS SHOES--!

I HATE GOING THROUGH OTHER PEOPLE'S GARBAGE FOR CLOTHES--

--BUT I'M LEFT WEARING NEXT TO NOTHING EACH TIME I CHANGE BACK FROM THE HULK!

I DON'T KNOW WHERE MY GREEN ALTER-EGO HAS BROUGHT ME TO THIS TIME--

ROWRRR

--BUT, AS SOON AS I'M DRESSED, I'M GETTING OUT!

QUIET, BOY! THAT'S A GOOD DOG!

AT THAT MOMENT:..

C'MON, GUYS! BULLETS CAN'T STOP THE HULK! WE GOTTA HIDE!

THIS WAY! HE WON'T FIND US BACK--

--HERE?!

UH, DON'T BE SCARED! I'M JUST--!

HOLY COW! DAD! DAD! COME QUICK!

WHAT'S WRONG, HAL, JR?

THERE'S A MAN BEHIND THE FENCE, DADDY--

--A MAN WEARING YOUR OLD CLOTHES!

A MAN?!

I-I'M SORRY, SIR--I DIDN'T MEAN TO SCARE THE BOY!

MY NAME'S BRUCE...BRUCE JONES! I WAS LOST, AND--!

LOST YOUR CLOTHES, TOO, IT SEEMS. YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A HOBO, MR., AH, JONES.

I'VE SEEN SOME HARD TIMES, MISTER...?

CHANDLER--HAL CHANDLER. THIS IS MY WIFE PEGGY, AND THE BOY YOU FRIGHTENED WAS OUR YOUNGEST SON, HAL, JUNIOR.

I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO...

THAT'S ALL RIGHT. HAL, JR., WAS ALREADY KEYED UP FROM PLAYING "HUNT-THE-HULK" WITH HIS OLDER BROTHER.

MR. JONES, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY ELDEST SON... CHUCK.

HI! BOY, IT SURE IS STUFFY INSIDE THIS HULK COSTUME!

NOW, MR. JONES--IT'S GETTING LATE AND THE TEMPERATURE DROPS FAST HERE IN LOS ALAMOS AFTER SUNSET. PEG'S GOT DINNER ALMOST READY--

--SO I INSIST YOU JOIN US FOR DINNER!

I--THANK YOU, MR. CHANDLER! I CAN'T REMEMBER ***WHEN*** I ATE LAST!

LATER, AFTER THE DINNER DISHES HAVE BEEN CLEARED AWAY...

THIS IS A WONDERFUL HOME YOU'VE GOT HERE, MR. CHANDLER--YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN. I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN THANK YOU FOR DINNER AND FOR YOUR INVITATION TO STAY THE NIGHT.

YOUR STORIES OF THE EARLY DAYS OF LOS ALAMOS WERE PAYMENT ENOUGH, BRUCE. YOU MUST HAVE LIVED HERE ONCE.

I--ER- WORKED HERE... WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. BUT THAT PHOTOGRAPH--

--I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THE LIKENESS BETWEEN THAT MAN AND YOUR SON, CHUCK!

THAT'S A PICTURE OF MY OLDER BROTHER-- THE FIRST CHUCK CHANDLER.

"CHUCK WAS THE BEST BROTHER A GUY EVER HAD--AN ALL-AMERICAN QUARTERBACK AND AN ACE TEST PILOT WHO ALWAYS HAD TIME TO SPEND WITH HIS FAMILY... AND WITH HIS CRIPPLED KID BROTHER

"THEN, ONE DAY IN THE 1950'S, CHUCK SUITED UP TO TEST-FLY THE AIR FORCE'S NEW *XF-13!*

"I CAN STILL REMEMBER HOW PROUD OF HIM I WAS AS HE CROSSED THE LANDING FIELD!

WISH ME LUCK, LITTLE BROTHER!

YOU DON'T NEED LUCK, CHUCK! YOU'RE THE GREATEST!

"CHUCK'S GIRLFRIEND PEGGY THOUGHT SO TOO.

"THE XF-13 LEFT THE GROUND AT A SPEED OF 400 M.P.H. -- AND ACCELERATED QUICKLY TO MACH 1.

"CHUCK'S GOAL WAS TO SET A NEW SPEED RECORD FOR MANNED FLIGHT--

"--WHEN HE RAN INTO...SOMETHING!

OH, BABY! I SEE IT-- BUT I'M NOT SURE I BELIEVE IT! A U.F.O.?!

"THAT WAS THE LAST ANYONE AT AIR FORCE TEST CENTER BETA EVER HEARD FROM CHUCK CHANDLER!"

HE--HE'S *GONE!*

G-GONE LIEUTENANT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN??

JUST THAT! I'M NOT GETTING CHANDLER'S PLANE ON THE RADAR SCREEN! HE--HE'S DISAPPEARED!

THE XF-13 CRASHED IN THE DESERT--BUT NO TRACE OF CHUCK WAS EVER FOUND.

FOR A TIME HAL AND I COMFORTED EACH OTHER--AND THEN WE REALIZED WE HAD MORE IN COMMON THAN JUST GRIEF OVER CHUCK. WE WERE MARRIED IN 1960.

I'M SORRY IF I'VE AWAKENED PAINFUL MEMORIES.

IT ALL HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO. BUT--YOU MUST BE TIRED.

SOON UPSTAIRS...

GOOD NIGHT, MR. JONES! I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW!

SLEEP WELL, BRUCE.

I WILL, HAL--AND THANKS AGAIN FOR THE HOSPITALITY.

AS BRUCE BANNER CLOSES THE DOOR OF THE GUEST-BEDROOM BEHIND HIM, THE SMILING FACE OF HAL CHANDLER UNDERGOES A GRIM CHANGE!

HE THANKS ME FOR MY HOSPITALITY--WHILE I SPEND EVERY MOMENT FEARING FOR THE SAFETY OF MY FAMILY!

BUT I DIDN'T DARE TURN HIM OUT--I COULDN'T TAKE THE CHANCE OF ANGERING HIM--

--KNOWING FULL WELL THE DESTRUCTION HE'S CAPABLE OF WREAKING!

SO I SAT THERE--A HELPLESS CRIPPLE--KNOWING THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY TO STOP HIM!

IT'S TIME, CHUCK--AFTER ALL THESE YEARS! I-I NEVER MEANT TO CALL ON YOU AGAIN, BUT WHAT ELSE CAN I DO--WITH A MONSTER SLEEPING UNDER MY VERY ROOF? BUT FIRST...

HELLO--NEW MEXICO STATE POLICE? THIS IS HAL CHANDLER OF LOS ALAMOS.

I'D LIKE TO REPORT THAT DR. BRUCE BANNER IS SLEEPING IN MY HOUSE TONIGHT.

THAT'S RIGHT--THE SAME DR. BANNER WHO IS ALSO THE *INCREDIBLE HULK!*

LIFE

NATIONAL MENACE

THE MAN!

THE MONSTER

NOW LET US TURN OUR GAZE NORTHWARD--TO A SCENE TAKING PLACE AT THE HUNTING CABIN OF GENERAL "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS, NESTLED HIGH IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES!

FRED! RICK! WE'VE GOT A VISITOR-- AND HE'S HURT!

IT LOOKS LIKE A GUNSHOT WOUND, BETTY! WE'VE GOT TO TEND TO HIM BEFORE HE BLEEDS TO DEATH!

I HATE TO INTERRUPT YOUR BIG DEBUT SCENE AS ***MARCUS WELBY, M.D.***, RICK--BUT YOUR "PATIENT" ISN'T EXACTLY HUMAN!

SUDDENLY...

STAND AWAY FROM HIM, HUMANS! MINE ARE THE ONLY HANDS WHICH CAN HEAL HIM!

HOLY SWEAT! WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?!

THAT IS NO CONCERN OF YOURS--

UNLESS THE CENTAUR SHOULD DIE!

BUT WE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH WOUNDING HIM!

THAT REMAINS TO BE PROVEN!

I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE'VE GOTTEN OURSELVES INTO BY FLYING UP HERE TO SEE BETTY'S FATHER, GENERAL ROSS--BUT I SURE AS BLAZES WANT THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO KNOW ABOUT IT!

RICK JONES WAS ONCE THE "SHORTWAVE KING" OF THE ***TEEN BRIGADE!*** I HOPE SOME OF THE OLD GANG STILL TUNE IN TO THE OLD BRIGADE FREQUENCY!

AS RICK CLICKS ON THE SHORTWAVE RADIO, HE ALSO HAPPENS TO GLANCE OUT THE CABIN ***WINDOW***...

SONUVA--! OUR MYSTERIOUS VISITOR DIDN'T COME ALONE!

HE'S BROUGHT A WHOLE BLAMED CIRCUS WITH HIM!!

HOWEVER, BEFORE RICK CAN BRING THE NEWS OF THE UNCANNY CARAVAN TO THE ATTENTION OF HIS FRIENDS--

--THE REAR DOOR OF THE CABIN SHATTERS INWARD!

STAND AWAY FROM THAT CREATURE, MISTER!

KRASH!

I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING HIS BLOODY TRAIL SINCE THE SIGHT OF HIM CAUSED GENERAL ROSS TO HAVE ANOTHER NERVOUS COLLAPSE!

THEN IT WAS HE WHO SHOT CENTAURIOUS!

FOR THAT, GREEN-HAIR, HE SHALL ANSWER TO--

--WOODGOD.

COME ON THEN, YOU CLOVEN-HOOVED FREAK!

WHA--?! OUR 'GUEST' HAS HOOVES-- AND HORNS--AND HE'S ATTACKING DOC SAMSON!

THIS IS RICK JONES CALLING THE TEEN BRIGADE! PRIORITY ALERT! REPEAT...

RICK JONES CALLING TEEN BRIGADE!

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY! I'M UNDER ATTACK! SEND HELP!

COME, CHANGELINGS. OUR LEADER NEEDS US!

THE INHUMAN FIGURES RUSH THE TINY CABIN EVEN AS RICK'S DESPERATE PLEA GOES OUT OVER THE AIRWAVES!

IT IS RECEIVED IN SALT LAKE CITY--BUT THERE IS NO ONE THERE TO HEAR IT.

RICK JONES CALLING TEEN BRIGADE...

EEN GADE of UTAH

IT CRACKLES OVER A HOME SET IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA--

RICK JONES CALLING TEEN BRIGADE...

--BUT THE SET'S OWNER HAS LONG SINCE OUTGROWN HIS HOBBY!

IT SPUTTERS AMIDST THE MASS OF COMMUNICATIONS CONSTANTLY BEING FED INTO THE AVENGERS' COMPUTERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD.

NOT PROPERLY PRIORITY-CODED, IT WILL NOT BE NOTICED!

RICK JONES CALLING TEEN BRIGADE...

THEN, FINALLY, THE TRANSMISSION IS MONITORED IN LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO--

--BY A BOY WHO SHOULD HAVE GONE TO BED!

RICK JONES CALLING...

WOW! RICK JONES-- THE FOUNDER OF THE TEEN BRIGADE--IN TROUBLE! I'VE GOTTA TELL DAD!

AFTER CHUCK HAS HEARD THE REST OF RICK'S MESSAGE...

DAD, LISTEN TO WHAT I--! DAD? WHY ARE YOU SITTING AND STARING LIKE THAT?

DAD-- WHAT'S WRONG?!

I'M AFRAID YOUR FATHER CAN'T HEAR YOU JUST NOW, CHUCK-- NOT WHILE I'M HERE!

WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?!? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY DAD?!

YOU CAN CALL ME... THE 3-D MAN! I'VE COME IN ANSWER TO YOUR FATHER'S SUMMONS--HIS FIRST IN OVER 20 YEARS!

YOU--YOU'RE MY UNCLE CHUCK, AREN'T YOU?!

YOU CAN SENSE THAT--NEVER HAVING KNOWN ME??

"IT'S TRUE--I AM YOUR UNCLE CHUCK! ON THAT DAY WHEN MY XF-13 VANISHED FROM THE RADAR SCREENS I WAS DRAWN ABOARD A UFO!*

*UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT--AL.

"INSIDE WERE A RACE OF INSIDIOUS SKRULLS--ALIENS WHO WERE OUT TO CONQUER EARTH!

"I FOUGHT THEM--

"--AND I FLED FROM THEM, KNOWING EARTH HAD TO BE WARNED!

THE SKRULLS WANTED TO BRAINWASH ME--TO SEND ME BACK AS A SPY--

--SO THEY HAD TO LEAVE THE XF-13 INTACT!

"I ROCKETED OUT OF THERE LIKE THE DEVIL WAS ON MY TAIL!

THE SKRULL SHIP'S EXPLODING!

"DON'T ASK ME HOW, BUT I FOUGHT THE XF-13 DOWN TO A CRASH-LANDING IN THE DESERT NEAR WHERE YOUR EVER-FAITHFUL FATHER WAS AWAITING ME!

HAL! HEY, LI'L BROTHER!

CHUCK! YOU--YOU'RE GLOWING!

"I REACHED OUT TO HAL JUST AS HE REACHED OUT TO ME--AND, AT THAT MOMENT, I CEASED TO EXIST!

CH-CHUCK!

"YOUR DAD RECOVERED, REACHED FOR HIS EYEGLASSES--AND THERE DISCOVERED THE IMPOSSIBLE!

OH, NO!

CHUCK'S BEEN REDUCED TO A PAIR OF RED AND GREEN IMAGES IMPRINTED ON MY GLASSES!

"MY LITTLE BROTHER WAS ALWAYS THE BRAINS OF THE FAMILY! HE FIGURED OUT THAT, BY FOCUSING ON THE TWO IMAGES--AND BY WILLING IT WITH ALL HIS MIGHT--

"--HE COULD BRING ME BACK TO LIFE IN THE REAL, THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORLD!

"ON THAT DAY--THE 3-D MAN WAS BORN!

AFTER SOME BRIEF ENCOUNTERS WITH SKRULL AGENTS IN THE 1950's, YOUR DAD CEASED TO CALL ON ME--AS IF HE WANTED TO FORGET I EVER EXISTED! BUT I KNEW WHAT HE KNEW, FELT WHAT HE FELT! AND NOW HE NEEDS ME AGAIN--TO DEFEND ALL HE HOLDS DEAR!

DEFEND US? FROM WHAT, UNCLE CHUCK??

FROM THE MAN-MONSTER MEN CALL... THE *HULK!*

AS IF ON CUE, THE FRONT DOOR OF THE CHANDLER HOUSEHOLD SLAMS INWARD, ADMITTING A SQUAD OF NEW MEXICO STATE POLICE!

THIS IS THE ADDRESS THE GUY GAVE ON THE PHONE!

WHAT'S THE STORY HERE?

WHA--! GET A LOAD OF THAT OUTFIT!

HAVE YOUR MEN SURROUNDED THE HOUSE, CAPTAIN?

YES, THEY HAVE--BUT WHO IN BLAZES ARE *YOU?!*

I AM CALLED THE 3-D MAN...AND I AM HERE TO HELP YOU CAPTURE THE HULK! AS BRUCE BANNER, HE IS ASLEEP UPSTAIRS! IF WE MOVE SWIFTLY ENOUGH, WE MAY CATCH HIM UNAWARES!

3-D MAN?! NEVER HEARD OF YOU! NOW SUPPOSE YOU START EXPLAINING...

BRUCE JONES IS *BRUCE BANNER?!*

THAT MEANS OUR HOUSE-GUEST IS THE HULK--AND THE HULK USED TO BE FRIENDS WITH RICK JONES!

I HEARD THAT ON THE MIKE DOUGLAS SHOW!

RICK'S IN TROUBLE--AND THE HULK MAY BE THE ONLY ONE ABLE TO HELP HIM!

DAD--ER, UNCLE CHUCK IS ONLY TRYING TO PROTECT US, BUT I'VE GOTTA REACH THE HULK BEFORE HE DOES!

WHILE BACK INSIDE THE HOUSE, SOME FAST TALKING ON THE PART OF THE 3-D MAN HAS OVERCOME (AT LEAST TEMPORARILY) THE SKEPTICISM OF THE POLICE!

FOLLOW ME!

WOW! LOOK IT HIM TAKE THOSE STAIRS FOUR AT A TIME!

WHILE ABOVE, NOT SUSPECTING THE 'NET' THAT IS BEING DRAWN AROUND HIM, BRUCE BANNER SLEEPS MORE SOUNDLY THAN HE HAS IN DAYS!

SO SOUNDLY, IN FACT, THAT HE DOES NOT HEAR THE BEDROOM WINDOW SLIDING OPEN...UNTIL A LOW VOICE IN THE DARKNESS CALLS HIS NAME!

DR. BANNER-- IT'S ME, CHUCK! YOU'VE GOT TO WAKE UP!

CHUCK? WHAT--?!

THERE'S NO TIME TO TELL IT ALL! MY DAD KNEW YOU WERE THE HULK ALL ALONG! HE KEPT YOU OVERNIGHT TO TRAP YOU!

THE POLICE AND MY UNCLE CHUCK ARE ON THEIR WAY UP NOW!

BUT I THOUGHT YOUR UNCLE CHUCK WAS--??

HE NEVER DIED! HE'S SOME KIND OF SUPER HERO LIVING INSIDE OF MY DAD! BUT THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT! WHAT *IS* IMPORTANT, IS THAT RICK JONES IS IN TROUBLE! HE NEEDS THE HULK'S HELP!

RICK?!

BANNER'S HEART STARTS TO HAMMER--HIS PULSE TO POUND--

--AND THE INEVITABLE CHANGE IN HIS BIOCHEMISTRY BEGINS EVEN AS THE DOOR SLAMS OPEN!

CHUCK?! OF ALL THE CRAZY STUNTS--! GET OUT OF HERE, NEPHEW! RUN! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S NOT A MAN ANYMORE--

--BUT A SAVAGE, MURDEROUS MONSTER!!

HULK DOESN'T KNOW YOU, FANCY-MAN...BUT HULK KNOWS WHAT MEN MEAN WHEN THEY CALL HULK "MONSTER"! THEY MEAN THEY WANT TO HURT HULK!

BUT HULK ALWAYS HURTS THEM WORSE!!

HE'S THROWN US BACK ONTO THE LANDING-- AND HE'S COMING AFTER US!

HE'S GOT TO BE STOPPED-- *NOW!*

DON'T SHOOT, FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN! YOU'LL HIT THE *BOY!!*

BOY IS HULK'S FRIEND! HE WARNED HULK OF DANGER!

BOY IS ALSO FRIEND OF RICK'S-- AND RICK IS IN TROUBLE!

WHO THE DEVIL IS THIS "RICK"??

WHO KNOWS? YOUR DEALING WITH AN IGNORANT RAGING BRUTE, CAPTAIN! A MONSTER WHO KNOWS ONLY ONE LANGUAGE...

FORCE! THE KIND OF *TRIPLE-THREAT* ONLY THE 3-D MAN CAN DISH OUT!

AS SOON AS I GET THE BOY AWAY, CAPTAIN-- HAVE YOUR MEN OPEN FIRE!

THOUGH THE 3-D MAN POSSESSES THE STRENGTH, SPEED AND STAMINA OF THREE MEN--

--HE IS NOT NEARLY A MATCH FOR THE MIGHTY HULK!

YOU KICKED HULK, FANCY-MAN!

NOW IT IS *HULK'S* TURN!

HE'S TEARING UP THE BANNISTER WITH ONE HAND--?!

I'VE GOT TO MOVE *THREE* TIMES FASTER THAN I'VE EVER MOVED BEFORE TO AVOID HIS BLOW!

DOES FANCY-MAN WANT TO FIGHT-- OR TO RUN?

NEITHER, YOU MIS-BEGOTTEN MONSTROSITY!

I ONLY WANT TO HOLD YOUR ATTENTION--

--WHILE PEGGY SNEAKS THE KIDS BEHIND YOU-- TO SAFETY DOWN THE BACK STAIRWAY!

CHUCK! HAL JR.! HURRY--BEFORE THE HULK SEES US!

BUT, MOM, YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND--!

WHILE YOUNG CHUCK CHANDLER ENDEAVORS TO EXPLAIN, THE HULK TURNS HIS FULL FURY ON THE RED AND GREEN SUPER-HERO!

YOU TRY TO TRICK HULK-- TRY TO TAKE AWAY HULK'S FRIEND!

WHAT COULD A MONSTER LIKE YOU KNOW ABOUT FRIENDSHIP?

HULK HAS HAD FRIENDS! RICK JONES! JIM WILSON! KRAKAJACK JACKSON! JARELLA!

BUT PUNY MEN LIKE YOU ALWAYS COME BETWEEN HULK AND HIS FRIENDS!

STRAK

WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME DOES IT TAKE TO STOP YOU?!

NO ONE CAN STOP THE HULK, FANCY-MAN!

FROOM!

COME, ALL OF YOU! COME WITH YOUR COSTUMES AND YOUR GUNS! HULK IS MIGHTIER THAN YOU ALL!

HULK IS THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!

CHUCK, WHO IS THAT COSTUMED MAN--

--AND WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR FATHER?

THE 3-D MAN IS DAD *AND* UNCLE CHUCK, MOM--TOGETHER THEY HAVE THE POWER OF THREE MEN!

WHEN UNCLE CHUCK COMES BACK TO LIFE, DAD SLIPS INTO A TRANCE!

YOUR UNCLE CHUCK-- ALIVE?! AND YOUR FATHER KEPT IT FROM ME ALL THESE YEARS?!?

OH, HAL--!

WHILE ABOVE...

STROW!

UNGHH!

THE HULK SMASHED THE 3-D MAN INTO THE ATTIC!

WE CAN'T SHOOT UNTIL THAT CRAZY SUPER HERO'S IN THE CLEAR!

WHY DON'T YOU CALL HULK NAMES *NOW* FANCY-MAN??

CRIPES! WE'VE GOT TO SHOOT! THE MONSTER'S GOING TO KILL HIM!

NO, PLEASE! YOU MUST LET ME THROUGH TO THEM!

LADY, HAVE YOU GONE NUTS?

IT'S STILL MY HOUSE, CAPTAIN!

YEAH-- AND YOUR FUNERAL, TOO!

PLEASE, CAPTAIN--I-I THINK I CAN REASON WITH HIM.

SO SAYING, THE COURAGEOUS WOMAN PUSHES PAST THE STARTLED POLICE OFFICER AND...

HULK, PLEASE, IF YOU'RE CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING-- HEAR ME NOW! THE MAN YOU'RE FIGHTING IS BOTH MY HUSBAND-- AND AN OLD FRIEND! I--I LOVE THEM BOTH!

YOU KNOW ABOUT FRIENDSHIP, DON'T YOU? YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO LOVE?

HULK KNOWS! HULK ONLY WANTED TO GO HELP HULK'S FRIEND WHEN FANCY-MAN ATTACKED HULK!

PEGGY, YOU CAN'T REASON WITH A MIND-LESS MONSTER!

AGAIN FANCY-MAN CALLS HULK MONSTER-- AGAIN?!?

KRATROOM!

I DUCKED JUST IN TIME! IF I'D BEEN ANY SLOWER THE HULK WOULD HAVE TORN MY HEAD OFF--

--INSTEAD OF JUST TEARING THIS HOLE IN THE ROOF!

CHUCK! HAL! WHOEVER YOU ARE! STOP THIS SENSELESS FIGHTING! LET THE HULK GO!

YES, HULK--GO-- TO GENERAL ROSS'S CABIN-- HE NEEDS YOU!

BOY AND BOY'S MOTHER WANT WANT HULK TO GO?

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO STANDS IN HULK'S WAY, FANCY-MAN! WILL YOU TRY TO STOP HULK?

N-NO, I WAS WRONG ATTACK YOU! PEGGY AND CHUCK MAKE ME SEE THAT, NOW!

GO! GET OUT OF HERE!

GOOD! HULK WAS TIRED OF FIGHTING!

HULK ONLY WANTS TO FIND RICK!

THE MONSTER'S GETTING AWAY!

POW PTOW POW

THE HULK'S GONE! THERE WAS NO WAY WE COULD HAVE STOPPED HIM!

WHAT WOULD WE HAVE DONE WITH HIM IF WE HAD, CAPTAIN?

I'D SAY WE WERE LUCKY.

WHILE INSIDE THE CHANDLER HOME...

YOU'VE KEPT A TERRIBLE WRONG FROM BEING COMMITTED HERE, CHUCK! DR. BANNER MEANT US NO HARM! YOUR FATHER SHOULD NEVER HAVE PROVOKED HIM INTO BECOMING THE HULK!

BUT WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHY HE DID IT! HEY! WHERE'S UNCLE CHUCK? WHERE'S THE 3-D MAN??

DOWN STAIRS...

YOU WERE WRONG, BROTHER HAL, TO OFFER A MAN HOSPITALITY AND THEN ATTACK HIM.

WHY DID YOU DO IT? TO PROVE YOURSELF TO PEGGY? TO IMPRESS THE KIDS?

DADDY! WAKE UP, DADDY!

YOU WEREN'T WILLING TO FREE ME FROM MY BIZARRE IMPRISONMENT FOR ALL THESE YEARS.

WHAT WERE YOU AFRAID OF-- THAT I'D TAKE PEGGY BACK? THAT I'D LEAVE YOU IN YOUR TRANCE STATE?

WE USED TO BE BEST FRIENDS AS WELL AS BROTHERS, HAL.

YOU SHOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT CHUCK CHANDLER-- THE 3-D MAN-- LIVED... AND DIED... IN THE 1950s.

FORGET I EVER EXISTED, LITTLE BROTHER. LIFE'S TOO COMPLICATED THESE DAYS FOR A SUPER HERO FROM A SIMPLER TIME!

AS THE 3-D MAN DISAPPEARS, HAL CHANDLER AWAKES FROM HIS TRANCE!

PEGGY! KIDS! YOU SAW--?

WOW!

WE SAW-- AND WE KNOW, DARLING!

IT WAS GREAT TO SEE UNCLE CHUCK IN ACTION, DAD--AND BRAVE OF YOU TO CALL ON HIM...BUT THE HULK WASN'T THE ENEMY!

SOMETIMES A MAN CAN BE HIS OWN WORST ENEMY, CHUCK...

PEGGY, I KEPT MY BROTHER'S EXISTENCE A ***SECRET*** ALL THESE YEARS, THINKING THAT--IF YOU KNEW THAT THE MAN YOU ONCE LOVED STILL LIVED--YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE MARRIED ME.

OH, HAL--I LOVED YOU BOTH--AND NOW I ***HAVE*** YOU BOTH!

THE BEST OF BOTH POSSIBLE WORLDS!.

NEXT ISH: IT'S THE GREAT GREEN GOLIATH TO THE RESCUE AS THE HULK HURRIES TO SAVE RICK, BETTY, FRED AND GENERAL ROSS FROM... THE CHANGELINGS!

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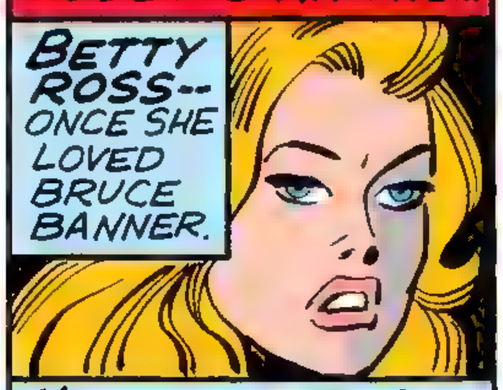

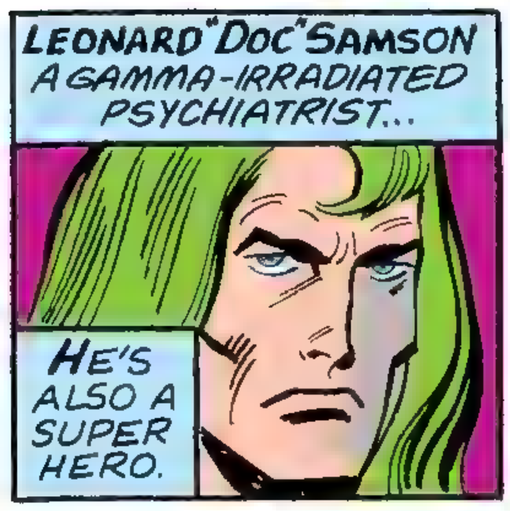

THE CHANGELINGS!

MEN HAVE CALLED HIM MONSTER... MEN HAVE CALLED HIM BRUTE--BUT BURIED WITHIN THE BESTIAL BODY OF THE HULK ARE THE MIND AND MEMORY OF A MAN... DR. BRUCE BANNER!

THUS, WHEN THE HULK LEARNED THAT RICK JONES WAS IN DANGER AT THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HUNTING RETREAT OF GENERAL "THUNDER-BOLT" ROSS--

--THE HULK KNEW, SOMEHOW INSTINCTIVELY, WHERE TO GO TO SAVE HIS FRIEND!

UNNHHH!

TEEN BRIGADE CALLING RICK JONES! COME IN RICK JONES!

HIS GREEN EYES GLARING WITHIN THE DARKNESS OF THE CABIN, THE JADE GIANT GROWLS!

BOY SAID RICK NEEDED HULK'S HELP! HULK HAS COME!

...CALLING RICK JONES! COME IN RICK JONES!

BUT RICK IS NOT HERE--ONLY GREEN-HAIR--SAMSON! WHERE IS RICK, SAMSON? TELL HULK, OR...

TEEN BRIGADE CALLING RICK JONES!

UNNHH!

FOR HOURS, DOC SAMSON HAS LAIN BEATEN AND BLOODIED, HIS DELIRIUM BROKEN ONLY BY THE REPETITIOUS CALL ON THE CABIN'S SHORTWAVE RADIO. THIS CALL IN RESPONSE TO RICK JONES' FRANTIC PLEA FOR HELP! NOW, HOWEVER, HE SENSES HE IS NO LONGER ALONE!

HELP--WHO EVER YOU ARE--HELP!

CHANGELINGS ATTACKED--TOOK BETTY, RICK, FRED AND GENERAL ROSS! COULDN'T STOP THEM!

HELP--OH, LORD! YOU! THE HULK!

YES, GREEN-HAIR HULK IS HERE! HULK HAS COME TO DO WHAT YOU COULD NOT DO!

HULK HAS COME TO SAVE HIS FRIENDS!

...RICK JONES! TEEN BRIGADE CALLING...

GOT TO GET ON MY FEET--!

CAN'T LET *YOU* GO AFTER THEM! THERE'D BE A FIGHT?

CHANGELINGS MUST BE--REASONED WITH--!

TALK! BAH! THAT IS SAMSON'S WAY, NOT HULK'S! REASON DID NOT HELP SAMSON SAVE HULK'S FRIENDS!

AND NOW SAMSON CANNOT EVEN HELP HIMSELF!

TEEN BRIGADE CALLING RICK JONES! COME IN, RICK JONES!

RICK IS IN TROUBLE, VOICE! YOU CANNOT SAVE HIM!

BUT HULK IS HERE! HULK WILL SAVE RICK!

TEEN BRIGADE CALLING... SQUARRK

SKARASH!

HUNDREDS OF MILES SOUTH, AT THE LOS ALAMOS, NEW MEXICO HOME OF THE CHANDLER FAMILY-- WHERE THE HULK WAS INFORMED OF RICK'S DANGER...

DID THE HULK GET TO COLORADO YET, CHUCK?

WHAT'S HAPPENING, SON?

I DON'T KNOW, DAD! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO REACH RICK JONES, BUT I DON'T KNOW IF HIS SET'S STILL OPERATING!

IT'S BEEN SILENT SINCE WE RECEIVED RICK'S S.O.S. AND SENT THE HULK TO HELP!

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE COLORADO CABIN...

STOP, HULK! IF YOU GO AFTER THEM, THE CHANGELINGS MAY KILL THEIR CAPTIVES!

I CAN'T LET YOU GO--!

SAMSON COULD NOT STOP THOSE WHO TOOK BETTY AND RICK AND FRED! SAMSON CANNOT STOP HULK! SAMSON IS TOO WEAK!

THAT IS BECAUSE SAMSON FIGHTS WITH HIS HEAD AND NOT WITH HIS HEART!

HULK'S HEART IS ANGRY--SO HULK WILL SMASH WHOEVER HURTS HULK'S FRIENDS!

THOUGH SAMSON'S HAIR IS GREEN LIKE THE HULK'S, SAMSON'S WEAPONS ARE WORDS! HULK DOES NOT NEED WORDS! HULK HAS POWER!

SO SAYING, THE HULK DEPARTS... TO FOLLOW THE FRESH-GOUGED WAGON TRACKS WHICH LEAD UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS!

BEHIND HIM, LEONARD SAMSON LAPSES AGAIN INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS!

MEANWHILE, TWO GAILY-PAINTED CIRCUS WAGONS ENTER A HIDDEN PASS HIGH UP AMIDST THE MOUNTAIN'S PEAKS!

CAGED LIKE ANIMALS AND CARRIED ALONG BY HIS UNCANNY CARAVAN, ARE RICK JONES, BETTY ROSS, GENERAL THUNDERBOLT ROSS, AND FRED SLOAN..,

...FOUR PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES ARE INTERTWINED WITH THAT OF THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

YOU GOTTA LET US OUT OF HERE! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT THE GENERAL NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION?

I AM NOT UNMINDFUL OF THAT FACT, HUMAN--

--BUT I MUST PUT THE WELFARE OF MY OWN PEOPLE ABOVE ALL OTHER CONCERNS!

THERE YOUNG CENTAURON LIES, GRIEVOUSLY WOUNDED BY YOUR OLD ONE'S WEAPON!

HE HAS LOST MUCH BLOOD! I FEAR HE MAY NOT SURVIVE!

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND! MY FATHER DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT HE WAS SHOOTING AT! HE THOUGHT YOUR FRIEND WAS A MONSTER!

MONSTER? YES, THAT IS WHAT YOUR KIND HAS EVER CALLED THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT!

CALLING US MONSTERS MAKES IT EASY FOR HUMANKIND TO BIND US WITH CRUEL CHAINS--TO HUNT AND KILL US WITHOUT MERCY!

BUT HERE **WE** RULE! IN THE KINGDOM OF THE CHANGELINGS IT IS **MEN** WHO ARE THE MONSTERS!

THAT THE REST OF THE CHANGELING COMPANY AGREES WITH THEIR LEADER IS CLEAR FROM THEIR GRIM EXPRESSIONS!

COME, BROTHERS AND SISTERS!

BEYOND THIS RIDGE LIES THE VALLEY WHERE WE HAVE MADE OUR HOME!

IT IS RUSTIC, ISOLATED--UNDISTURBED BY SIGNS OF OUTWARD STRIFE--A PIECE OF PARADISE NESTLED HIGH UP IN THE MOUNTAINS!

WELCOME HOME, WOODGOD! I SEE YOUR MISSION HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL ONE!

YES, MINOTAURUS! WE APPREHENDED VIPERUS--

--HIDING FROM US AMIDST THAT WHICH THE HUMANS CALL A 'CARNIVAL'.

HISS

I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW HE ESCAPED THIS VALLEY, WOODGOD--

--BUT I SEE YOU HAVE BROUGHT YET ANOTHER DANGEROUS SPECIES HOME WITH YOU!

DANGEROUS SPECIES? HE CAN'T MEAN US, CAN HE?

I'M AFRAID HE DOES, FRED!

PURSUIT OF VIPERUS LED US NEAR TO HUMAN HABITATIONS! THEIR OLD ONE SHOT AND WOUNDED CENTAURON!

YOU KNOW OUR LAWS IN SUCH CASES, WOODGOD! WHOSOEVER HARMS A CHANGELING--MUST *DIE!*

UH-OH! A RASPY OFF-SCENE VOICE! IN FICTION THAT ALWAYS SPELLS TROUBLE!

FROM THE LOOKS OF THE SPEAKER, I'D SAY HERE IT SPELLS TROUBLE WITH A CAPITAL 'T', FRED!

BUT THEY CAN'T REALLY MEAN TO KILL US!

IT HAS OCCURRED TO ME, LEONINUS, THAT VIPERUS DID NOT ESCAPE WITHOUT *HELP*. IF SUCH PROVES TO BE THE CASE--

--THEN WHOEVER FREED HIM BEARS PARTIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CENTAURON'S INJURY!

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU ARE IMPLYING, WOODGOD--BUT OUR LAWS ARE CLEAR! THE HUMANS MUST DIE!

BUT GENERAL ROSS WAS ILL--SUFFERING FROM A NERVOUS COLLAPSE WHEN HE WOUNDED YOUR FRIEND!

HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS DOING!

HIS FATE IS FOR WOODGOD TO DECIDE!

YES! THOUGH THE HEARTS OF MY MATE AND MYSELF CRY OUT FOR VENGEANCE, IT WAS YOU WHO *GAVE* US OUR SON, WOODGOD!

DECIDE THE HUMANS' FATE AND WE WILL ABIDE BY YOUR DECISION!

AS LONG AS CENTAURON LIVES, THE HUMANS WILL REMAIN IN MY CUSTODY. SHOULD HE DIE--

--THEN WILL I SIT IN JUDGMENT UPON THEM!

WOOD-GOD, I PROTEST--!

AS I HAVE SPOKEN, LEONINUS, SO IT SHALL BE!

AYE--FOR NOW, WOODGOD! BUT, SHOULD YOU CONTINUE TO PROTECT THE HUMANS IN THE EVENT OF CENTAURON'S DEATH, THEN MAY THE CHANGELINGS RECALL THAT YOU ALONE OF OUR NUMBER--

--CLAIM *HUMAN* PARENTAGE!

AND THEN SHALL THE CHANGELINGS REMEMBER THAT LEONINUS *OPPOSED* THIS STAY OF EXECTUTION!

BRINGING ALL DISCUSSION TO AN END, WOODGOD ORDERS HIS HUMAN CAPTIVES TO BEAR THE WOUNDED CENTAURON INTO THAT DWELLING HE CALLS HIS OWN!

THERE, FATHER--REST! WE'RE SAFE IN HERE!

IT'S A SCIENTIFIC LABORATORY! YOU'D NEVER GUESS IT FROM THE COTTAGE'S SIMPLE EXTERIOR!

AND ALL THESE BOOKS--IT'S A LIBRARY!

THEY ARE ALL ESSENTIAL TO MY WORK.

JUST WHAT *IS* YOUR WORK, WOODGOD? WHO ARE YOU AND YOUR CHANGELINGS? WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?

ONCE I WOULD HAVE ANSWERED THAT WE CAME FROM ***SCREAM*** AND TO ***SCREAM*** WE WOULD RETURN.

IN THE BEGINNING, ***SCREAM*** WAS THE NAME I GAVE TO THE HATRED, FEAR AND DESPAIR WITHIN ME.

IN THE BEGINNING--?

"YES--THAT IS HOW ONE OF YOUR BOOKS DESCRIBES CREATION, ISN'T IT? AS GOD MADE MAN...SO DID MAN CREATE WOODGOD.

HE'S WAKING UP ELLEN! HE'S ALIVE!

IT'S A MIRACLE, DAVID! YOU'VE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED A TOTALLY NEW LIFE-FORM!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ***SON!***

LISTEN! HE CAN SPEAK!

FATHER?

HIS BRAIN CELL GROWTH IS ASTONISHING! IN MERE MINUTES HE'S PROGRESSED MENTALLY FROM INFANCY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD!

"TWO DAYS LATER MY PHYSICAL GROWTH WAS COMPLETE. THOUGH I POSSESSED THE MENTAL CAPACITY OF AN ADULT, I BEGAN TO LEARN AS A CHILD DOES.

"MY 'PARENTS'--SCIENTISTS DAVID AND ELLEN PACE--WERE TO BE MY TUTORS.

LORDY! PACE IS MAKIN' MONSTERS UP HERE!

"UNFORTUNATELY, THEY ONLY GOT AS FAR AS NAMING THEIR BEAST-BOY ***WOODGOD*** WHEN THEIR EXPERIMENT WAS DISCOVERED.

"THE LOCAL TOWNSPEOPLE OF LIBERTY, NEW MEXICO, WERE SUSPICIOUS OF THE PACES TO BEGIN WITH--HAVING HEARD OF THEIR CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN MILITARY PROJECTS INVOLVING BIOCHEMICAL WARFARE.

"AT THE TIME, SHEEP HAD BEEN DYING AND CHILDREN HAD BECOME ILL. SUSPICION TURNED INTO FEAR--FEAR TO VIOLENCE...

HOLY CRUD! WILLYA LOOK AT THAT THING IT *IS* A MONSTER!

BLAM

"AS I LAY AWASH WITH UNFAMILIAR PAIN, I REMEMBER HEARING MY FATHER BEGGING THE TOWNSPEOPLE NOT TO SHATTER THE GAS CANNISTERS INSIDE THE BARN.

"THEY IGNORED MY FATHER, AND THE SWIRLING PURPLE MIST KILLED THEM ALL.

"SOMEHOW, I SURVIVED, IMMUNE TO MY FATHER'S NERVE-GAS WHICH SPREAD ITS POISONOUS CLOUD OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE.

"I WANDERED IN CHILDLIKE DESPAIR AFTER MY PARENTS...

FATHER? MOTHER?

"IN TIME I WOULD COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT DEATH HAD CLAIMED THEM AS WELL.

"THE NERVE-GAS HAD BEEN DEVELOPED BY MY FATHER FOR COLONEL DEL TREMENS OF TRANQUILITY BASE.

DISCOVERING MY EXISTENCE, TREMENS AND HIS FORCES ATTACKED! I INSTINCTIVELY, FOUGHT BACK--SAVAGELY!

UNABLE TO SLAY ME, TREMENS TRIED TO TRAP ME WITHIN THE SEALED-OFF TOWN OF LIBERTY!

TRANQUILITY BASE WAS ALL BUT DESTROYED AFTER TREMENS TRIED TO LAUNCH THE THREE OF US INTO SPACE!

BUT A MONSTER CALLED THE HULK AND A HUMAN BY THE NAME OF SPIDER-MAN BROKE THE QUARANTINE!

"I FLED FROM MANKIND, SEEKING THE SOLITUDE OF THE WOODS WHERE, EVENTUALLY, I RETURNED TO THE PACE FARM.

"THERE, I FOUND BOOKS. WITH MY RAPIDLY INCREASING INTELLIGENCE I SOON TAUGHT MYSELF TO READ.

"I KNEW, THEN, WHO I WAS AND HAD FOUND THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE MY PAIN.

"SHORTLY THEREAFTER, I FLED NORTH TO THESE MOUNTAINS. USING MY FATHER'S NOTEBOOKS, I LEARNED HOW TO DUPLICATE--OTHER ANIMALS--THE VERY ACT OF CREATION THAT HAD MADE ME.

"THE CHANGELINGS WERE MADE AFTER MY OWN IMAGE.

"I WAS NO LONGER, ALONE."

NOW DISTRACT ME NO FURTHER WITH QUESTIONS. THE BULLET HAS GONE DEEP AND CENTAURON HAS LOST MUCH BLOOD. I MUST SAVE HIS LIFE--

--IF I AM TO SAVE YOURS.

MEANWHILE, THE HULK HAS FOLLOWED THE WAGON TRACKS TO THE CHANGELINGS' MOUNTAIN RETREAT!

SAMSON WANTED TO STOP HULK FROM GOING THIS WAY--SO HULK KNOWS THIS IS THE WAY HE MUST GO TO FIND RICK!

A MONSTER ENTERING OUR VALLEY?! NEPTUNUS WILL SET AN AMBUSH FOR HIM ERE HE GOES TOO FAR!

UNAWARE THAT HE IS UNDER OBSERVATION, THE HULK PLODS ON!

WAGON TRACKS END AT BRIDGE--THEN START AGAIN ON OTHER SIDE!

IF RICK AND BETTY AND FRED CROSSED BRIDGE--

--THEN THAT IS WHAT HULK MUST DO!

NOT IF I STOP YOU, GREEN ONE!

HUNH! SOMETHING HAS GRABBED HULK'S LEG--PULLING HULK FROM BRIDGE!

HULK WILL SMASH--!

BUT NO SOONER DOES THE HULK'S UNSEEN ATTACKER DRAG HIM BELOW THE SHIMMERING SURFACE THEN THE HULK FINDS HIMSELF BOUND BY SWAMP WEEDS!

HE THRASHES TO BE FREE, BUT HE IS OFF BALANCE--OUT OF HIS ELEMENT!

HULK CAN'T BREATHE! WATER PLANTS HOLD HULK--AND NOW FISH-MAN ATTACKS!

I WARNED WOODGOD THAT OTHER HUMANS WOULD COME TO THIS VALLEY IN SEARCH OF THOSE WE CAPTURED--

--BUT EVEN I NEVER EXPECTED THEM TO BE SOUGHT AFTER BY A MONSTER!

MONSTER? FISH-MAN TALKS INSIDE HULK'S HEAD--

--AND CALLS HULK A MONSTER?!?

FROOSH

WITH A HUGE EXHALATION, THE HULK RELEASES THE REMAINING AIR STORED UP IN HIS BELLOW-LIKE LUNGS!

HAH! HULK HAS BLOWN AWAY POND AND FISH-MAN! HULK IS FREE!

IT IS GOOD TO BREATHE THE AIR--NOT SO GOOD TO BREATHE WATER!

LEAVING NEPTUNUS HIGH AND DRY BEHIND HIM--

--THE GREEN GOLIATH PRESSES ON TOWARDS THE CHANGELINGS' VILLAGE!

MORE ANIMAL-PEOPLE!

HULK WILL ASK THEM WHY THEY HAVE BROUGHT HULK'S FRIENDS HERE!

BEFORE THE HULK CAN SPEAK, HOWEVER, HIS HALF-TON TREAD GIVES HIS PRESENCE AWAY!

CENTAURIA, A MONSTER ENTERS OUR VILLAGE!

FLEE, MY MATE! I WILL PROTECT YOU!

CENTAURIO, NO! DO NOT FIGHT THE MONSTER ALONE! WAIT FOR THE OTHERS!

MINOTAURUS... HELP!

PUNY HUMANS ALWAYS ATTACK HULK--AND NOW ANIMAL-PEOPLE ATTACK HULK, TOO! WHY? HULK HAS ONLY COME FOR HIS FRIENDS!

YOUR HUMAN 'FRIENDS' HAVE TRANSGRESSED AGAINST OUR KIND, MONSTER!

BUT THEY WILL REMAIN--UNTIL THEIR CRIME CAN BE JUDGED!

LIKE THE FISH-MAN, BULL-MAN CALLS HULK MONSTER!

YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED NEPTUNUS--AND STILL MADE IT TO OUR VILLAGE?

YOU COULD NOT HAVE PASSED HIM UNLESS YOU HAD FIRST SLAIN HIM!

WITH VENGEFUL FURY THE CHANGELINGS HURL THEMSELVES ON THE FALSELY-ACCUSED HULK! MEANWHILE, THEIR CLASH IS OBSERVED BY THE GENTLE BIRD-WOMAN--SIREN!

OH! I MUST HELP COMBAT THIS VIOLENT STRANGER!

SWEET SIREN, IS THAT A HEALING POTION FOR CEN-TAURON YOU BEAR?

Y-YES, LEONINUS--SO IT IS!

THEN HASTEN TO OUR LEADER, WOODGOD, BEARING BOTH BALM AND BAD TIDINGS OF THIS NEW INVASION! I WILL AID OUR FELLOW CHANGELINGS IN YOUR STEAD!

GOOD LEONINUS, I GO!

FOOLISH CHILD! SO INTENT WAS SHE ON THE BATTLE, THAT SHE FAILED TO SEE THE VIAL I EMPTIED INTO HER HEALING POTION...

A VIAL CONTAINING A DEADLY POISON!

NOW TO SET ABOUT THE REST OF MY SCHEME!

AT WOODGOD'S COTTAGE...

SIREN, HAVE YOU THE HEALING POTION?

YES, WOOD-GOD--AND NEWS! WE ARE ATTACKED BY A GREEN-SKINNED MONSTER!

THE HULK?!

SO HE CALLED HIM-SELF!

HE'S COME TO SAVE US! MY RADIO MESSAGE GOT THROUGH! THE TEEN BRIGADE MUST HAVE CONTACTED HIM!

WOW! THIS IS ONE FOR MY BOOK--THE HULK MAKING LIKE THE CAVALRY!

NO, HUMANS.

BY ATTACKING, THE HULK HAS JUST MADE YOUR POSITION MORE PRECARIOUS.

I WILL TRY TO STOP THE BATTLE--

--BUT FIRST AND FORE-MOST I MUST CURE CEN-TAURON!

WOODGOD ADMINISTERS THE POTION--UN-AWARE THAT LEONINUS HAS TAMPERED WITH IT!

OUTSIDE, THE BATTLE RAGES ON...

GIVE UP, GREEN ONE! THE HORNS OF MINO-TAURUS CAN AS EASILY GORE YOU, AS HOLD YOU DOWN!

GIVE UP? YOU TELL THE HULK TO *GIVE UP??*

YOU DO NOT KNOW THE HULK THEN, BULL-MAN!

WHY SHOULD HULK SURRENDER--

--WHEN HULK IS THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS?!?

WHROOM!

HULK DID NOT WANT TO HURT YOU! HULK ONLY WANTED TO FIND HIS FRIENDS AND TAKE THEM AWAY FROM THIS PLACE!

YOU ENTER OUR VILLAGE UNBIDDEN--ATTACK OUR PEOPLE--AND YOU EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THAT YOUR INTENTIONS ARE INNOCENT?

BRAK!

ARRGHH!

NO, MONSTER! NEW TO THIS WORLD WE MAY BE--BUT WE ARE NOT NAIVE!

CAUGHT FLUSH BY THE FLASHING HOOVES OF CENTAURIO, THE MIGHTY HULK HURTLES HEADLONG...

CRASH!

...THROUGH THE WALL OF WOODGOD'S COTTAGE!

RICK! BETTY! FRED!--HULK HAS COME TO *SAVE* YOU!

OH, HULK, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! YOUR PRESENCE HERE WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE!

WE DON'T NEED SAVING, HULK! AS SOON AS CENTAURON RECOVERS WE'LL GO FREE!

THEN WHY DID RICK CALL FOR HELP?

AT THE TIME I DIDN'T KNOW OUR CAPTORS WERE INTELLIGENT BEINGS! I THOUGHT...

THOUGHT?! RICK IS LIKE ALL THE REST! HE THINKS TOO MUCH!

THINKING IS WHAT BROUGHT HULK HERE--WHAT HAS MADE HULK FIGHT WHEN THERE IS NO NEED TO FIGHT!

BUT THERE *IS,* GREEN ONE! YOU HAVE HURT NEPTUNUS AND MINOTAURUS--FOR THAT I WILL SCRATCH YOUR EYES OUT!

SIREN, NO! TURN BACK!

HULK, DON'T HURT HER--PLEASE?!

GO AWAY, BIRD-GIRL! FRED DOES NOT WANT HULK TO HURT YOU!

I APPRECIATE THE HUMAN'S CONCERN FOR ME--

--BUT IT IS NOT *HIS* PEOPLE WHICH YOU HAVE HURT... IT IS *MINE!*

ARRGHH! BIRD-GIRL CLAWS AT HULK!

HULK DOES NOT WANT TO HURT YOU--HULK DOES NOT EVEN WANT TO FIGHT YOU!

BUT IF YOU HURT HULK, HULK WILL HURT YOU BACK!

OHHH!

FWAP

HULK, FOR HEAVENS' SAKE--SHE'S ONLY A GIRL!

FRED DOESN'T WANT HULK TO HURT BIRD-GIRL, BUT FRED SAYS NOTHING WHEN SHE HURTS HULK!

IT IS FRED WHO MUST DECIDE WHO HIS FRIENDS ARE--HULK... OR ANIMAL-PEOPLE!

IT IS AT THAT MOMENT THAT THE DAZED GENERAL ROSS CHANCES TO RETURN TO "REALITY"

BETTY, MY DAUGHTER-- WHERE ARE WE? SAFE, YOU SAY? WITH FRIENDS?

BUT--WHO IS THAT I SEE? NO! IT'S *HIM!* HE'S NO FRIEND! HE'S A MONSTER! A VICIOUS, MURDERING MONSTER!

HE'S THE HULK!

RUN! RUN BEFORE HE KILLS US ALL!

SO! OLD ONE IS WITH FRIENDS? AND HULK IS NOT A FRIEND-- EVEN THOUGH HULK HAS COME TO HELP?!

HULK UNDERSTANDS! HULK *IS* A MONSTER--AND MONSTERS HAVE NO FRIENDS!!

FWAM!

AYE, GREEN ONE--BUT *FOES* THERE STILL BE APLENTY!

WOODGOD, CAN'T YOU STOP THIS MADNESS? EITHER YOUR CHANGELINGS WILL KILL THE HULK, OR...

OR MORE OF MY PEOPLE WILL BE HURT!

VERY WELL! THERE IS NO MORE I CAN DO HERE FOR CENTAURON--THE HEALING POTION MUST HAVE TIME TO DO IT'S WORK!

I WILL GO--TO CALM MY CHANGELINGS AND TO TRY AND REASON WITH YOUR SAVAGE SAVIOR!

THE HULK AND I *FOUGHT* WHEN LAST WE MET. FIRST AGAINST EACH OTHER... THEN SIDE-BY-SIDE AGAINST MAN--OUR COMMON ENEMY!

PERHAPS HE WILL REMEMBER THAT, AND CEASE HIS RAMPAGE--

--THOUGH I FEAR HE WILL KNOW ME NOT... AND REGARD ME INSTEAD AS YET ANOTHER FOE!

WOODGOD'S WORDS PROVE PROPHETIC! TO THE EMBATTLED HULK, HE IS JUST ANOTHER ANIMALISTIC ATTACKER!

SLAY THE MONSTER!

NO! SUBDUE HIM GENTLY, MY CHANGELINGS-- FOR HE HAS MORE IN COMMON WITH US THAN YOU CAN KNOW!

NOW MAN-GOAT LEAPS AT HULK TOO?

NO MATTER HOW MANY YOU ARE, HULK WILL SMASH YOU ALL!

TAKE IT EASY, GENERAL! THE HULK'S NOT HERE TO HURT YOU!

LORD, IS THIS THE SAME OLD SPIT-FIRE SOLDIER WHO ONCE COMMANDED ALL OF GAMMA BASE?

THANK YOU FOR TENDING TO ME, HUMAN!

CALL ME FRED, OKAY?

I'D BETTER SEE TO CENTAURON! HE'S LYING SO STILL...

AWAY, ANIMAL-MEN! HULK HAS HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR HOOVES AND HORNS!

UNNH! HE SHRUGS US OFF AS IF ALL OUR POWER WERE NOTHING!

POWER? WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF POWER? HULK IS STRONGER THAN YOU ALL!

BUT HULK IS TIRED OF FIGHTING! HULK IS SICK OF THIS PLACE!

SINCE NOT EVEN HULK'S FRIENDS WANT HULK HERE, HULK WILL GO AWAY!

HE'S GONE--OUT OF THE VILLAGE AND ON THE PATH BACK OUT OF THE VALLEY! WE COULD NOT STOP HIM EVEN IF WE WISHED TO!

OH, NO! NO!

EH? THE HUMAN FEMALE--CRYING OUT IN ALARM?!

WOODGOD, COME QUICKLY! IT'S CEN-TAURON! I-I THINK HE'S... DEAD!

A HUSH FALLS OVER THE CHANGELING VILLAGE, AS WOODGOD RACES TO CENTAURON'S SIDE!

THE HEALING POTION SHOULD HAVE RESTORED HIM--SIREN MIXED IT FROM MY OWN FORMULA! YET HERE HE LIES--LIFELESS--AS COLD AND DEAD AS STONE!

IT WAS THE OLD HUMAN WHO SLEW CENTAURON, WOODGOD! YOU KNOW WHAT OUR LAWS DEMAND!

WE MUST SET AN EXAMPLE OF CHANGELING JUSTICE!

ALL THE HUMANS MUST SUFFER FOR CENTAURON'S DEATH!

WE MEANT NO HARM! YOU CAN'T JUST KILL US! IT--IT WOULD BE INHUMAN!

WE ARE **NOT** HUMAN, WOMAN! REMEMBER--WE ARE MONSTERS!

BUT YOU'RE NOT! YOU'VE PROVEN THAT! YOU HAVE LAWS...

YES, WOMAN--LAWS WHICH DECREE THAT YOU FOUR MUST ANSWER FOR THE DEATH OF CENTAURON WITH YOUR OWN LIVES!

LEONINUS--WITH CHANGELINGS THE LIKE OF WHICH THIS VALLEY HAS NEVER SEEN!

SO THAT IS WHY YOU SET VIPERUS FREE, LEONINUS--TO DISTRACT US--GAIN ACCESS TO MY LABORATORY...

...THAT YOU MIGHT CHALLENGE MY LEADERSHIP BACKED BY CHANGELINGS OF YOUR OWN CREATION!

IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S GONNA BE A FULL SCALE WAR TO DECIDE WHETHER WE HUMANS LIVE OR DIE--

"--AND WE JUST SENT AWAY THE ONLY BEING ON EARTH WITH THE POWER TO SAVE US!"

HULK'S FRIENDS DON'T NEED HULK!

NOBODY NEEDS HULK!

HULK WILL GO AWAY...AND NEVER COME BACK!

NEXT ISSUE

JUDGMENT DAY!

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THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

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TRIAL BY MONSTER!

STan Lee PRESENTS: THE INCREDIBLE HULK!®

HIGH IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES, TWO GROUPS OF ANIMAL-MEN PREPARE TO ENGAGE IN A CIVIL WAR! THE PURPOSE? TO DETERMINE THE FATE OF A GROUP OF HOSTAGE HUMANS -- FRIENDS OF THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

THE CHANGELINGS -- PART II!

BILL MANTLO STORY * SAL BUSCEMA ART * JOE ROSEN, LETTERS BOB SHAREN, COLORS * AL MILGROM EDITOR * JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LF225

THE VILLAGE OF THE CHANGELINGS, HIDDEN FROM THE EYES OF THE WORLD! HERE THE MAN-BRUTE CALLED WOODGOD RETREATED TO BREED A RACE OF ANIMAL-MEN SO THAT HE MIGHT NO LONGER DWELL ALONE!

BETTY--WE'RE IN TROUBLE! THE CHANGELINGS BLAME *US* FOR GENERAL ROSS SHOOTING THAT YOUNG CENTAUR.

DADDY STILL HASN'T RECOVERED FROM HIS NERVOUS BREAKDOWN, RICK--HE CAN'T BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS! BESIDES, HE ONLY WOUNDED CENTAURON!

YET CENTAURON DIED--AND CHANGELING LAW DEMANDS THE DEATH OF ANY WHO HARM ONE OF OUR RACE!

NONE SUSPECT THAT I, *LEONINUS*, POISONED CENTAURON'S MEDICINE! I *WANTED* TO FORCE THIS CONFRONTATION WITH WOODGOD!

SLAY THEM, WOODGOD--OR DOES THE FACT THAT *YOUR* PARENTS WERE HUMAN CAUSE YOU TO DISREGARD OUR LAWS?

HAVE A CARE, LEONINUS! YOU USED MY ABSENCE TO STEAL MY NOTES AND CREATE EVIL CHANGELINGS OF YOUR OWN--

--BUT I STILL LEAD HERE, AND AS LONG AS I DO, MY *WORD* IS LAW!

YET, THE HUMANS *DID* CAUSE CENTAURON'S DEATH, WOODGOD!

YES! AND WHILE WE ORIGINAL CHANGELINGS REMAIN LOYAL TO YOU, YOU MUST AVENGE MY SON!

SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE! WE SENT THE HULK AWAY WHEN HE CAME TO HELP US BECAUSE CENTAURON WAS ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY! WE WERE ABOUT TO BE FREED! THEN, SUDDENLY, CENTAURON DIED!

SIREN, HELP US! YOU DON'T BELIEVE WE'RE KILLERS! YOU *LIKE* US--I'VE SEEN IT IN YOUR EYES!

I LIKE *YOU*, FRED SLOAN--

--BUT MY LOYALTY IS TO MY PEOPLE! I WILL ABIDE BY WHATEVER THEY DECIDE!

I ONLY PRAY THAT I HAVE NOT LOST MY HEART TO ONE WHO IS ABOUT TO DIE!

SIREN!

SHE'S GONE! SO MUCH FOR THE OLD SLOAN CHARM! I WAS SURE SHE CARED ENOUGH TO WANT TO HELP US!

THAT'LL SOUND SWELL ON OUR TOMBSTONES, FRED! LISTEN, I DON'T LIKE HAVING MY LIFE DICKERED OVER BY TWO COMPETING FACTIONS!

WE'VE GOTTA GET *OUT* OF HERE!

BUT HOW, RICK? THE CHANGELINGS AREN'T GOING TO LET US GO, AND WE SENT AWAY THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD POSSIBLY HELP US! IF ONLY WE KNEW WHERE THE HULK IS NOW!

IF ONLY THERE WERE SOME WAY TO BRING HIM BACK!

THROUGH VERDANT WOODLANDS THE GREEN GOLIATH TREADS, BACK ALONG THE PATH THAT BROUGHT HIM TO THE CHANGELINGS' VALLEY!

HIS MIGHTY HEART IS AWASH WITH GRIEF! IN THE LIFE OF THE HULK, THERE ARE FEW THE JADE GIANT COULD CALL FRIENDS--

--AND NOW IT SEEMS THAT EVEN THOSE FEW HAVE NO USE FOR THE LONELY LEVIATHAN!

HULK ONLY CAME TO THIS VALLEY BECAUSE HULK LEARNED HIS FRIENDS NEEDED HIM! BUT RICK, FRED AND BETTY TOLD HULK TO GO AWAY!

THERE IS FISH-MAN HULK FOUGHT! HULK IS SORRY NOW, SORRY HE EVER CAME WHERE HE IS NOT WANTED--

--SORRY HE HURT FISH-MAN BY EMPTYING ALL THE WATER IN FISH-MAN'S POND!

NOTICING A STEADY TRICKLE OF WATER FROM THE BANKS OF THE RIVER-- THE HULK AGONIZINGLY DRAWS THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS MOISTURE HIDDEN IN THE GROUND.

HE SEEKS IT THE ONLY WAY HE KNOWS HOW--

HULK WILL SHOW FISH-MAN HE IS SORRY BY PUTTING WATER BACK!

KVOM!

THERE! FISH-MAN HAS HIS POND BACK!

THE SAME MONSTER WHO EARLIER DEFEATED ME, WHEN I ATTEMPTED TO KEEP HIM FROM THE VALLEY, NOW *REVIVES* ME?! BUT, WHY?!?

THE CHANGELING, NEPTUNUS, DOES NOT PURSUE HIS QUESTION!

PERHAPS HE SUSPECTS THAT IT IS NOT WISE TO PRESS TOO CLOSELY FOR ANSWERS FROM THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

I MUST TELL WOODGOD AND THE OTHERS WHAT HAS OCCURRED!

FORGING AHEAD THROUGH THE FERTILE FOREST, THE JADE GIANT FINDS HIS PATH BLOCKED!

HULK! SO YOU DID FOLLOW RICK, FRED, BETTY AND HER FATHER TO THIS VALLEY?!

HULK CAME TO DO WHAT DOC SAMSON COULD NOT DO BECAUSE SAMSON WAS HURT!

HULK CAME TO SAVE HULK'S FRIENDS-- BUT THEY DID NOT WANT HIS HELP! NOW HULK DOES NOT CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM!

WELL *I* CARE, YOU BRAINLESS MONSTER!

MONSTER?! EVERYONE CALLS HULK A MONSTER!

IF HULK IS A MONSTER, THEN HULK WILL *ACT* LIKE A MONSTER! NO MORE FRIENDS! ALL PUNY HUMANS ARE HULK'S ENEMIES, AND HULK WILL SMASH THEM ALL!

BLAST IT, IN MY CONCERN FOR THE OTHERS, I FORGOT MY OWN PSYCHIATRIC PROFILE STUDIES OF THE HULK!

MENTALLY, HE'S LIKE A CHILD--AN AWESOMELY POWERFUL, INCREDIBLY AGGRESSIVE CHILD-- INCAPABLE OF REASON ONCE HE'S TAKEN OVER BY RAGE!

IF I HAD APPROACHED HIM CALMLY, I MIGHT HAVE LEARNED WHAT I NEEDED TO KNOW! NOW THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF PREVENTING A FIGHT!

DOC SAMSON HAS ALSO FORGOTTEN ONE OTHER FACT HE'S LEARNED OVER HIS LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE EMERALD BEHEMOTH... THAT THE WORST THING ONE CAN DO IS AROUSE THE HULK'S WRATH!

FOR THE **MADDER** THE HULK GROWS, THE **STRONGER** HE GETS!

MEANWHILE, IN THE VILLAGE OF THE CHANGELINGS...

WILL YOU UPHOLD OUR LAWS, WOODGOD-- OR WILL YOU DEFEND THE MURDERING HUMANS FROM THE RIGHTEOUS REVENGE OF YOUR FELLOW CHANGELINGS?

I WROTE OUR LAWS, LEONINUS! I DECIDE WHEN THEY ARE TO BE ENFORCED!

NO! CHANGELING LAW BINDS US ALL EQUALLY!

I HAVE NO REGARD FOR THE LAWS--I MERELY USE THEM TO TRAP WOODGOD! HE HAS NO WISH TO SLAY THE HUMANS-- YET HE MUST, OR HE RISKS FORFEITING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ANIMAL-MEN!

RICK, LEONINUS HAS BETTY! CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING?

I'M JUST A ROCK SINGER PLAYING THE CONCERT CIRCUIT!

STILL, I GUESS I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ALL THE TRICKS I LEARNED WHEN I WAS PARTNERS WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA AND CAPTAIN MARVEL!

THAT'S OUTTA MY LEAGUE-- BUT I'LL BACK YOU UP AS BEST I CAN!

LEONINUS, NEED WE WAIT ANY LONGER? LET US SLAY THE HUMANS NOW!

ELEPHANTINE ISSS RIGHT! THE TIME HASSS COME TO TASSSTE HUMAN BLOOD!

NO! THERE WILL BE NO RETRIBUTION! WHEN I FIRST DRAFTED OUR LAWS I WAS BITTER, FULL OF HATRED FOR HUMANITY!

SINCE THEN I HAVE LEARNED THAT, IF WE ARE TO BE DIFFERENT FROM THE SONS OF MAN, OUR JUSTICE MUST BE MERCIFUL!

OTHERWISE WE WILL BECOME NO BETTER THAN THEY!

COMPASSION AND MERCY WILL NOT REVIVE OUR SON, WOODGOD!

YOUR OWN CREATIONS REJECT YOUR PLEA, WOODGOD!

NOW STAND ASIDE AND LET US ENFORCE THE LAW!

LEONINUS, IN ALL OF THIS I SEE YOUR EVIL HANDIWORK! IT WAS YOU WHO SET VIPERUS FREE, SO THAT WE HAD TO LEAVE THE VALLEY TO BRING HIM BACK-- THUS LEADING TO CONTACT WITH THE HUMANS, AND CENTAURON'S DEATH!

VILLAIN! I CURSE THE DAY I RAISED YOU FROM YOUR BESTIAL EXISTENCE! IN SOME WAY THAT IS NOT YET CLEAR, I KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ENGINEERED TODAY'S EVIL!

IN TURNING MY CHANGELINGS AGAINST ME, YOU HAVE SULLIED MY DREAM OF A RACE AT PEACE WITH ITSELF!

BUT I WILL NOT LET YOU DESTROY IT WITHOUT A FIGHT!

TO ME, MY CHANGELINGS! WOODGOD HAS GONE MAD!

COMMAND AND WE OBEY, LEONINUS!

THEN STRIKE DOWN HE WHO WOULD PLACE HIS CONCERN FOR HUMANITY ABOVE THE SAFETY OF HIS OWN RACE!

LIKE A RIVER OVER-FLOWING ITS BANKS, THE EVIL CHANGELINGS SPILL ONTO THE RAGING WOODGOD!

WOODGOD, WHO WAS GENETICALLY ENGINEERED TO BE POWERFUL--THAT HE MIGHT SURVIVE IN A HOSTILE WORLD--FINDS THAT NOT EVEN HIS FLASHING HOOVES AND FLAILING FISTS CAN LONG SAVE HIM AS HE IS RENT AND TORN BY FANG AND TUSK AND CLAW!

WOODGOD'S FIGHTING FOR US! WE'VE GOTTA HELP HIM!

STAND YOUR GROUND, HUMANS! WOODGOD HAS SEEN FIT TO ANSWER LEONINUS' CHALLENGE-- BY COMBAT!

SINCE HE HAS LOST OUR SUPPORT, HE MUST CARRY THE FIGHT ALONE!

FROM A THATCHED ROOFTOP, THE BIRD-GIRL KNOWN AS SIREN WATCHES AS HER LEADER AND CREATOR FIGHTS ON UNAIDED!

THE SIGHT IS MORE THAN SHE CAN BEAR! GRIEF-STRICKEN, SHE TAKES WING--

--SETTING DOWN OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE/LABORATORY OF WOODGOD!

HERE IT WAS THAT YOUNG CENTAURON DIED OF HIS WOUNDS!

WOODGOD DID EVERYTHING HE COULD! THE HEALING POTION HE HAD ME PREPARE SHOULD HAVE GIVEN CENTAURON THE STRENGTH TO RECOVER!

INSTEAD, CENTAURON PASSED AWAY SOON AFTER IT WAS ADMINISTERED! WAIT! THE POTION! INSTEAD OF A SWEET SCENT OF HERBS, I DETECT THE PUNGENT FRAGRANCE OF BITTER ALMONDS!

CYANIDE! *POISON!*

BUT WHO WOULD HAVE TAMPERED WITH--?!

LEONINUS! I REMEMBER HE STOPPED ME AS I CARRIED THE POTION TO WOODGOD!

COULD HE HAVE POISONED THE POTION, WHILE DISTRACTING ME WITH THE NEWS OF THE HULK'S ARRIVAL IN THE VILLAGE?

IN HER MIND'S EYE, SIREN IMAGINES WHAT, IN FACT, TRANSPIRED!

YES! IT IS THE ONLY ANSWER! LEONINUS-- NOT THE HUMANS-- IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CENTAURON'S DEATH! HE MUST HAVE WISHED TO FORCE A CONFRONTATION WITH WOODGOD FOR LEADERSHIP OF THE CHANGELINGS!

THEIR BATTLE IS TOO FAR ADVANCED FOR MERE WORDS TO HALT IT NOW! I MUST SEEK HELP!

FILLED WITH FEAR, SIREN SOARS FROM THE VILLAGE!

MILES AWAY, THE FOREST STILL REVERBERATES TO THE DIN OF TITANS CLASHING!

EVEN THOUGH MANY MONTHS AGO I TRANSFERRED SOME OF THE HULK'S POWER TO MYSELF, THE HULK IS STILL STRONGER!

HE'S SHRUGGING OFF EVERY ATTACK AS AN ELEPHANT MIGHT SHRUG OFF A MOSQUITO!

IF ONLY I COULD SOMEHOW SUBLIMATE MY INTELLECT--BECOME AS SAVAGE AND UNREASONING AS THE HULK--PERHAPS THEN I MIGHT FIND *MY* POWER INCREASING IN PROPORTION TO MY RAGE!

SAMSON ATTACKS HULK WITH TREE?

SKA

HULK WILL *SMASH* SAMSON'S STUPID TREE!

TROOM!

UNNGHH!

I'VE GOT TO STOP THIS--FIND BETTY, RICK, FRED, AND THE GENERAL! BUT PART OF ME WANTS TO GET *MAD* ENOUGH TO TEAR THE HULK LIMB FROM LIMB!

WHAT GOOD IS IT BEING DOC SAMSON--SUPER HERO--IF I CAN'T BRING THIS UNTHINKING BRUTE TO HIS KNEES?

ONCE MORE THE TWO GAMMA-IRRADIATED BEINGS HURL THEMSELVES AT EACH OTHER--

--UNAWARE THAT THEIR BATTLE HAS BROUGHT THEM DEEPER INTO THE VALLEY OF THE CHANGELINGS, WHERE SIREN FINDS NEPTUNUS OBSERVING THE AWESOME STRUGGLE!

WHAT IS IT? WHY DO THE GREEN-HAIRED AND GREEN-SKINNED HUMANS FIGHT EACH OTHER?

THE ONE CALLS THE OTHER A MONSTER--AND SEEKS TO PROVE IT BY ACTING THE SAVAGE HIMSELF!

THEY MUST BE STOPPED! ONLY THEIR MIGHT CAN SAVE THE HUMANS AND WOODGOD NOW!

WOODGOD IN DANGER?! SIREN, WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED--?!

THE DIS-TRAUGHT BIRD-GIRL DOES NOT STOP TO ANSWER! SHE KNOWS THAT EACH PASSING SECOND BRINGS DISASTER EVER CLOSER FOR CHANGELINGS AND HUMANS ALIKE!

CURSE YOUR EMERALD HIDE, HULK-- WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH GENERAL ROSS, BETTY, FRED AND RICK?

ALL HULK DID WAS LEAVE WHEN HULK'S FRIENDS SAID THEY DIDN'T NEED HIM ANYMORE! THEY HATE THE HULK JUST LIKE SAMSON HATES THE HULK!

HUNH? BIRD-GIRL WHO ATTACKED THE HULK IN VILLAGE FLIES AT HULK AGAIN!

BIRD-GIRL TURNED FRED AGAINST HULK! WHAT DOES BIRD-GIRL WANT NOW?

A WINGED-WOMAN--COVERED WITH FEATHERS! WHAT HAVE I STUMBLED INTO?!

THE VALLEY OF THE CHANGELINGS --WHERE THOSE FRIENDS YOU SEEK HAVE NEED OF YOUR POWER NOW!

HULK HAS NO FRIENDS!

YOU ARE WRONG, HULK! THEY *ARE* YOUR FRIENDS, AND THEY ARE NOW IN DANGER FROM WHICH ONLY YOU CAN SAVE THEM!

IF YOU CARE-- FOLLOW ME!

FOR THE SMALLEST FRACTION OF A SECOND, THE COMBATANTS HESITATE... THEN FOLLOW THEY DO!

AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE VILLAGE OF THE CHANGELINGS, AN UNEQUAL STRUGGLE NEARS ITS SORRY END!

IS THIS HOW YOU WOULD LEAD US, WOODGOD-- BY CRAWLING IN THE DUST?

HE ISSS BEATEN! LET USSS SSSLAY HIM NOW!

NO, VIPERUS-- HE MAY YET LIVE AMONG US! HE NEED ONLY RENOUNCE HIS CLAIM TO LEADERSHIP!

AND LEAVE MY CHANGELINGS TO BE LED INTO EVIL BY YOU, LEONINUS? NEVER!

THEN I AM AFRAID YOU LEAVE ME LITTLE CHOICE, CREATOR!

SLAY HIM!

ELEPHANTINE BEARS DOWN ON WOODGOD'S BACK!

HE OWES THE GOAT-MAN NOTHING-- HE OWES LEONINUS, WHO GRANTED HIM INTELLIGENCE, ALL!

ARRGHH!

MINOTAURUS! ARE YOU JUST GOING TO STAND BY AND WATCH AS WOODGOD IS KILLED?

WOODGOD SOUGHT TO DEFEND HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE CHANGELINGS-- AND LOST TO LEONINUS! BUT, STILL...

HOW IS IT WRONG FOR A HUMAN TO KILL ONE OF OUR RACE, YET RIGHT FOR CHANGELING TO SLAY CHANGELING?

QUESTION NOT MY ACTIONS, MINOTAURUS, LEST YOU SUFFER YOUR LEADER'S FATE!

YOU HAVE INFLICTED ENOUGH SUFFERING, EVIL ONE! THE HUMANS ARE INNOCENT OF CENTAURON'S DEATH! YOU, LEONINUS, ARE THE ONLY MURDERER HERE!

ALONE, SIREN MIGHT NOT HAVE COMMANDED THE ATTENTION OF THE COMBATANTS. BUT NOW, FLANKED BY HER TWO AWESOME COMPANIONS, SHE IS A PRESENCE TO BE RECKONED WITH.

SIREN--IN ALLIANCE WITH THE VERY MONSTER WE DROVE FROM OUR VILLAGE EARLIER, AND WITH A GREEN-HAIRED HUMAN? LISTEN NOT TO HER, CHANGELINGS! SHE IS A TRAITOR TO HER OWN RACE!

IT IS YOU WHO HAVE BETRAYED US, LEONINUS, BY PLAYING ON OUR FEARS OF HUMANITY-- BY BLAMING THE HUMANS FOR CENTAURON'S DEATH AND THEN SEEKING TO WREST LEADERSHIP OF THE CHANGELINGS FROM WOODGOD WHEN HE SOUGHT TO DEFEND THEM!

BUT ONLY YOU, WHO HAD GAINED ACCESS TO WOODGOD'S LABORATORY, KNEW HOW TO MAKE THE POISON THAT KILLED CENTAURON!

POISON?! THEN IT WAS NOT THE HUMAN'S WEAPON THAT CAUSED CENTAURON TO DIE?!

LEONINUS SLEW OUR SON?!

AND BLAMED THE HUMANS, TO MAKE US DISTRUST WOODGOD BECAUSE OF HIS HUMAN HERITAGE!

THE TRUTH IS OUT, LEONINUS! THE TIDE HAS TURNED AGAINST YOU!

YOU SPOKE MUCH OF OUR LAWS WHEN IT SUITED YOUR EVIL PURPOSES! NOW LET ME REMIND YOU THAT THE PENALTY FOR MURDERING A CHANGELING--

--IS THE SAME AS THAT WHICH YOU DEMANDED FOR THE HUMANS--

--DEATH!

HELP ME, MY CHANGELINGS! FOR ATTACKING HIM EARLIER, YOU CAN EXPECT ONLY DEATH FROM WOODGOD!

LEONINUSSS ISSS RIGHT! WE MUSSST FIGHT-- OR DIE!

LEONINUS TRIES TO DUPE YOU INTO SAVING HIM AS HE DUPED *US* INTO DESERTING WOODGOD, VIPERUS!

LIAR! YOU HATE USSS AND DESSSIRE OUR DEATHSSS! BUT WE WILL SSSLAY YOU BEFORE YOU CAN SSSLAY USSS!

I SPEAK THE TRUTH, BUT IF YOU WILL NOT ACCEPT IT, THEN FIGHT WE MUST!

SHREE! RISE, SIREN-- RISE AND FACE THE TALONS OF SHE WHO IS CALLED...THE FURY!

FLEE, SIREN! LEONINUS BRED THE FURY FROM A GIANT CONDOR!

WHILE I WAS GENETICALLY ENGINEERED BY WOODGOD FROM A SPARROW-HAWK!

I MAY NOT POSSESS HER SIZE OR STRENGTH--

--BUT I WILL NOT ABANDON MY FELLOW CHANGELINGS!

SO, HUMAN--YOU ALLY YOURSELF WITH WOODGOD'S CHANGELINGS? THEN EXPECT NO MERCY AT THE TUSKS OF ELEPHANTINE!

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT ELEPHANT-MAN AND CAT-MAN, SAMSON, AND *REMEMBER* NEXT TIME YOU CALL THE HULK *MONSTER!*

I'VE ALWAYS MORE OR LESS REGARDED THE HULK AS INCAPABLE OF REASON. YET, HE JUST MADE A FAIRLY COMPLEX POINT!

MAYBE THE HULK IS FAR MORE CAPABLE OF ANALYTIC THOUGHT THAN I, OR ANYONE ELSE, EVER GAVE HIM CREDIT FOR!

I'LL HAVE TO DELVE DEEPER INTO THAT-- IF WE COME OUT OF THIS ALIVE!

AS THE INCREDIBLE HULK CLOSES IN MORTAL COMBAT WITH ELEPHANTINE--

--AND, AS THE SLEEK PANTHERUS LEAPS AT THE THROAT OF LEONARD "DOC" SAMSON...

...THE SCIENTIST-CUM-SUPER HERO SMILES INWARDLY AT THE UNEXPECTED POSITION HE NOW FINDS HIMSELF IN-- BATTLING BACK-TO-BACK WITH THE JADE GIANT HE'D EARLIER TRIED TO DEMOLISH!

YET, EVEN STRANGER ALLIANCES ARE TO BE ENTERED INTO THIS DAY!

RICK, WE'VE GOTTA HOLD VIPERUS DOWN!

TELL THAT TO *HIM*, FRED! WE'VE GOT HIS TAIL-- BUT THE PART OF HIM WITH TEETH AND TALONS IS SNAKING BACK TOWARD US!

LEAVE THE MAN-SERPENT TO ME, HUMANS!

WHILE THE COLD-BLOODED COILS OF VIPERUS MAY POSE A DEADLY DANGER TO YOU-- HE IS NO MENACE TO THE MIGHT OF MINOTAURUS!

HISSSTAHH!

WAY TO GO!

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ALL ON THE SAME TEAM NOW!

STAY HERE, DADDY-- WHERE YOU'LL BE SAFE! I'VE GOT TO HELP WOODGOD'S CHANGELINGS!

BETTY-- DAUGHTER-- COME BACK! I-I CAN'T LET YOU EXPOSE YOURSELF TO DANGER!

YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT YEARS AGO, DADDY--

--BEFORE YOU FORGOT ABOUT ME... LOST ME IN YOUR BLIND OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO DESTROY THE HULK!

TERROR CLUTCHES AT THE HEART OF THADDEUS "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS AS HE WATCHES HIS ONLY CHILD HURL HERSELF INTO THE FRAY!

BUT THERE IS PRIDE, ALSO -- PRIDE FOR THIS DAUGHTER WHO HAS SHARED IN HIS HARD, SOLDIER'S LIFE...

... AND WHO HAS EMERGED AS A VIBRANT YOUNG WOMAN, WITH MORE THAN HER SHARE OF COURAGE!

FURY CANNOT REMAIN ALOFT WITH THE HUMAN FEMALE WEIGHING HER DOWN!

YOU WILL DIE, HUMAN, AS SOON AS I CAN SHAKE YOU LOOSE FROM MY CLAW!

I'M HOPING ONE OF WOODGOD'S CHANGELINGS WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR LOSS OF ALTITUDE FIRST, FURY!

I SHALL INDEED, BETTY ROSS!

SH REE

MEANWHILE, DOC SAMSON COMES CLOSER TO GUESSING THE CHANGELINGS' ORIGIN THAN HE KNOWS!

THIS PANTHER-MAN, AND ALL THE OTHER CREATURES -- THEY'VE BEEN GENETICALLY ENGINEERED UP THE EVOLUTIONARY LADDER FROM ANIMALS!

THERE WERE TWO SCIENTISTS -- DAVID AND ELLEN PACE -- WORKING ON SUCH A PROJECT... BUT THEY DIED! *

LISTEN TO ME! EVEN WHILE FIGHTING, I SOUND LIKE I'M PREPARING A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION! I WISH I COULD DECIDE WHO I AM--SCIENTIST OR SUPER HERO!

*THE PACES CREATED WOODGOD, THE ORIGINAL CHANGELING -- AMIABLE AL.

SAMSON'S DILEMMA ABOUT HIS TRUE CALLING, PERPLEXING TO HIM THOUGH IT MAY BE, DOES NOT NOTICEABLY DETRACT FROM THE MAN'S EFFECTIVENESS IN A FIGHT!

MRE-OWR!

AND IF PANTHERUS THOUGHT HIMSELF SAFELY OUT OF THE FIGHT DUE TO HIS PLUNGE INTO THE VILLAGE WELL...

I SWAM THROUGH THE VALLEY'S SYSTEM OF UNDERGROUND STREAMS TO GET HERE IN TIME!

NOW THE TRIDENT OF NEPTUNUS SHALL *ADD* TO THE MAN-CAT'S NATURAL AVERSION TO WATER!

THOUGH ECHOING IN THE CLOSE CONFINES OF THE WELL, PANTHERUS' SCREAMS SCARCELY CARRY OVER THE DIN OF THE CONFLICT RAGING ABOVE!

WHAT MANNER OF BEING *ARE* YOU THAT YOU RESIST THE OVERWHELMING POWER OF ELEPHANTINE?!

HULK IS HULK, AND NOW THAT ELEPHANT-MAN HAS SHOWN HOW STRONG *HE* IS...

...IT IS HULK'S TURN!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ?!?

HULK IS GOING TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE!

HULK IS GOING TO MAKE AN ELEPHANT *FLY!!*

NOOOOOOOOOO

*IT IS A LESSON THE PONDEROUS PACHYDERMAL-MAN WILL STUDY **WELL**, BEFORE HE AGAIN DARES PIT HIS POWER AGAINST THE EVER-INCREDIBLE HULK!*

THAT IS WHAT *ALL* WHO FIGHT HULK SAY WHEN HULK IS ABOUT TO WIN!

BUT SAYING "NO" CANNOT STOP HULK!

WHOM!

CLASS DISMISSED!

ALL HIS EVIL CHANGELINGS FALLEN OR IN FLIGHT, LEONINUS TRIES ONE LAST LEAP FOR LEADERSHIP!

IF HE CAN SLAY WOODGOD, HE MAY STILL RALLY HIS FORCES BEHIND HIM!

BUT SUCH IS NOT TO BE...

NO! IT CANNOT END NOW-- NOT LIKE THIS-- NOT WHEN I WAS SO CLOSE TO WINNING ALL!

YOU ARE A FOOL, LEONINUS, AND DEFEAT IS A FOOL'S ONLY FORTUNE!

HAD YOUR GREED NOT BLINDED YOU, YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN THE GLORY TO BE GAINED BY EXISTING AS PART OF A NEW SOCIETY-- A NEW ORDER-- WHERE ALL CHANGELINGS ARE EQUAL!

YOU STROVE TO TAKE FROM ME THAT WHICH I WOULD GLADLY DISOWN-- MY MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP! I HAD PLANNED THAT IN THE FUTURE, EACH CHANGELING WOULD RULE HIMSELF!

IT IS THAT RIGHT FOR WHICH I FOUGHT-- AND THAT RIGHT WHICH I WILL DEFEND AGAINST ALL CHALLENGERS, EVEN AT THE COST OF MY LIFE!

THERE IS NO NEED, WOODGOD! ALL WHO STOOD AGAINST YOU ARE FALLEN! THE BATTLE IS WON!

THE VICTORY BELONGS TO US ALL! TODAY OUR VERY RIGHT TO EXIST WAS THREATENED-- FROM WITHIN-- YET, WE ENDURE!

YOU HAVE GIVEN US LIFE AND LAWS, WOODGOD! OUR FUTURE WE MUST NOW FORGE FOR OUR-SELVES!

HULK, I TRIED TO PREVENT YOU FROM COMING TO HELP HERE, AFRAID THAT YOU'D ENDANGER THE CHANGELINGS' HOSTAGES BY REACTING BRUTISHLY, MINDLESSLY! I WAS WRONG!

TODAY I SAW YOU REASON ANALYTICALLY AND FIGHT STRATEGICALLY! MAYBE *I'M* THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO THINK BEFORE I ACT!

LEN'S RIGHT, HULK! WE ALL FEARED WHAT YOU MIGHT DO...

AND DROVE YOU AWAY WHEN YOU ONLY WANTED TO HELP! WE'RE SORRY, BIG FELLA!

WHAT ARE YOU ALL SAYING? HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MINDS ?!? THE HULK CAN'T THINK-- CAN'T REASON! HE'S A MONSTER WHO DESTROYS EVERYTHING HE TOUCHES!

NO, DADDY--YOU KNOW THAT WAS NEVER TRUE! EVEN AT HIS WORST, THE HULK ALWAYS POSSESSED SOME SMALL PART OF THE PERSONA OF BRUCE BANNER--A BRILLIANT PHYSICIST, A DEDICATED HUMANITARIAN, A MAN I LOVED!

BUT MANKIND HUNTED HIM, HURT HIM, UNTIL HE WAS DRIVEN TO DESPERATE, SAVAGE MEASURES! LEFT ALONE, HE'S HARMED NO ONE-- AND HELPED QUITE A FEW!

IN HIS OWN WAY, FATHER, THE HULK IS AS TORTURED, TOR-MENTED, AND FRIEND-LESS... AS *YOU* ARE!

BETTY'S NOT PULLING ANY PUNCHES, BUT MAYBE THAT'S WHAT THE OLD SOLDIER NEEDS!

HUMANS, YOU ENTERED THIS VALLEY AS ENEMIES-- BUT YOU HAVE PROVEN YOURSELVES FRIENDS! FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIVE, YOU SHALL HAVE THE UNDYING GRATITUDE OF THE CHANGELINGS! WHENEVER YOU WISH, I WILL ESCORT YOU HOME!

UH, EVERYONE BUT *ME*, WOODGOD! I'M STAYING! I FIGURE YOU'LL NEED A LIAISON BETWEEN HUMANITY AND YOURSELVES SOMEDAY AND... WELL, HERE I'LL FIND THE PEACE AND QUIET TO FINISH MY BIOGRAPHY OF THE HULK!

I SUSPECT THERE WAS ANOTHER INDUCEMENT TO YOUR DECISION, FRED! I WISH YOU *BOTH* THE BEST OF LUCK!

SOON, ON A RIDGE AT THE PERIMETER OF THE VALLEY OF THE CHANGELINGS...

I CAN GO NO FURTHER! BEYOND THESE MOUNTAINS THE SONS OF MAN DWELL! MOST WOULD REACT WITH FEAR AND LOATHING TO THE THOUGHT OF COEXISTING WITH MY CHANGELINGS! PERHAPS, IN TIME, THAT WILL CHANGE, AND BOTH OUR RACES MAY DWELL TOGETHER...

BUT, IN THE MEANTIME, WE'LL KEEP YOUR SECRET, WOODGOD!

AND WE'LL ALWAYS REGARD YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE AS FRIENDS!

HUNH! ANIMAL-MEN HAVE FRIENDS! FRED HAS BIRD-GIRL! BETTY HAS FATHER, AND RICK AND SAMSON HAVE PEOPLE WHO NEED THEM! BUT WHO NEEDS HULK? WHAT DOES HULK HAVE? NOBODY! NOTHING!

YOU'RE WRONG, HULK! WE *ALL* WANT TO HELP YOU!

AS YOU ARE-- OR AS BRUCE BANNER! WE'LL DO WHATEVER WE CAN!

NOTHING'S SO IMPORTANT THAT I WOULDN'T GIVE IT UP TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE IF YOU NEED ME, BIG FELLA!

HULK WANTS TO BELIEVE-- BUT HULK HAS BEEN FOOLED SO MANY TIMES BEFORE!

AND YOU'LL BE TRICKED AGAIN, YOU FILTHY, GREEN FREAK! I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO REALIZES THAT A MONSTER LIKE YOU CAN'T BE ALLOWED TO LIVE-- AND, THE NEXT TIME YOU DESTROY SOMEONE OR SOMETHING, THESE FOOLS WILL KNOW IT, TOO!

ROSS HAS ALWAYS BLAMED HULK FOR DESTROYING THINGS-- EVEN IF HULK WAS FAR AWAY! MAYBE NOW HULK *WILL* DESTROY FOR REAL! MAYBE HULK WILL DESTROY *ROSS!*

HULK, NO! PUT HIM DOWN!

DADDY!

ARHH! YOU ALL SAY YOU ARE HULK'S FRIENDS, BUT YOU RUSH TO HELP ROSS EVERYTIME HE CALLS HULK *MONSTER!*

HULK HAS SEEN IT BEFORE! NOW ROSS IS SICK--BUT WHEN HE GETS BETTER HE WILL SEND SOLDIERS AFTER HULK! TANKS! BOMBS! PLANES!

HULK WILL FIGHT BACK AS HULK *ALWAYS* FIGHTS BACK--BUT WILL HULK'S FRIENDS FIGHT BESIDE HIM?

NO! HULK'S FRIENDS WILL STAY WHERE IT IS SAFE--

THEY WILL NOT HELP HULK!

ARE THESE THE KIND OF FRIENDS HULK NEEDS?

HULK DOES NOT THINK SO!

HULK!

HE'S LEAPING AWAY!

THOSE LEG MUSCLES OF HIS ARE AMAZING! HE'S ALREADY OUT OF SIGHT!

IT'S NOT HIS MUSCLES THAT *I* FIND AMAZING, DOC-- BUT HIS MIND!

THE HULK UNDERSTANDS... MAYBE BETTER THAN *WE* DO, JUST WHAT KIND OF FRIENDS WE ARE!

THE FAIR-WEATHER KIND!

WITH APOLOGIES TO GRAHAM PARKER, WE'RE GONNA CALL THIS ONE...

NEXT ISSUE: **WAITING FOR THE U-FOES!**

50¢ CC | 254 DEC 02456

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THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

TM

THE HULK FACES FOUR FANTASTIC NEW ENEMIES...

WAITING FOR THE U-FOES!

MILGROM

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INCREDIBLE HULK!®

WAITING FOR THE U-FOES!

SOMEWHERE IN A DESERT OF THE GREAT AMERICAN SOUTHWEST, A TORMENTED SOUL STANDS, SCREAMING HIS SORROWS TO THE STAR-FILLED SKY!
WHAT IS WRONG WITH HULK? WHY CAN'T HULK HAVE FRIENDS?
DO STARS HAVE THE ANSWER? CAN STARS TELL HULK WHY HE MUST ALWAYS BE ALONE?

BILL MANTLO, WRITER & **SAL BUSCEMA**, ARTIST
WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS THEIR APPRECIATION: TO EDITOR **AL MILGROM** FOR DESIGNING THE COSTUMES OF THE **U-FOES**; TO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF **JIM SHOOTER** FOR HELPING WITH THE NAMES; TO ROCKER **GRAHAM PARKER** FOR INSPIRING THE TITLE AND FOR THE GREAT BACKGROUND MUSIC; TO LETTERER **DIANA ALBERS**, WITHOUT WHOM YOU COULDN'T READ THIS TALE; AND TO COLORIST **BOB SHAREN**, WITHOUT WHOM YOU'D BE READING IT IN BLACK-AND-WHITE!

THERE IS PAIN IN THE GREEN GOLIATH'S VOICE... PAIN AND CONFUSION.

WHY DON'T STARS ANSWER? CAN'T THEY HEAR HULK?

HUNH! HULK KNOWS THE REASON! STARS ARE TOO FAR AWAY TO HEAR!

HULK MUST GET CLOSER TO THE STARS!

THOOM

THERE ARE THOSE WHO QUESTION THE EXTENT OF THE HULK'S MENTAL PROCESSES.

INDEED, IT IS UNCLEAR JUST HOW FAR HIS UNDER-STANDING GOES.

HE IS UNAWARE THAT EXPOSURE TO GAMMA RAYS TURNED HIM FROM A MERE MAN TO THE MIGHTIEST MORTAL ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH!

TO HIS HATED ALTER-EGO **BRUCE BANNER** -- THAT DAY BEGAN A NIGHTMARE--THE BEGINNING OF A LIFE ACCURSED!

TO THE HULK, HOWEVER, IT MEANT THE BIRTH OF... **POWER--**

--THE POWER TO FLEX MIGHTY LEGS AND **LEAP**--

--THE POWER TO BATTER UPWARDS THROUGH EARTH'S UPPER ATMOSPHERE--

--THE POWER TO SURVIVE A SCREAMING, SKELETON-SHATTERING PLUNGE BACK TO EARTH--

--AND THE POWER TO LEAP AGAIN!

IN SHORT, HE GAINED THE POWER TO DO ALMOST EVERYTHING--

--EXCEPT REACH THE DISTANT STARS!

AAARRHH!

HULK HAS GONE... AS *FAR* AS HULK CAN GO--AS *HIGH*... AS HULK CAN GO!

IT IS *COLD* HERE--HARD FOR HULK TO BREATHE--HARD FOR HULK TO MOVE!

AND HULK IS STILL... SO FAR...FROM THE... THE STARS!

THE HULK FLOATS ALMOST WEIGHTLESSLY, NOW! PROPELLED BY MUSCLE POWER ALONE, HE NEARLY LEAPED INTO ORBIT AROUND THE EARTH. BUT HE WOULD NOT BE IMPRESSED WITH THE RESULT OF THE AWESOME EFFORT!

THE **STARS** ARE WHAT IS IMPORTANT--AND HE HAS FAILED TO REACH THEM!

HE IS NO LONGER CONSCIOUS AS HE IS PULLED BACK INTO EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE! THE LACK OF OXYGEN HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL ON EVEN HIS MIGHTY LUNGS!

PERHAPS HE IS FORTUNATE IN NOT BEING AWARE--FOR NOT EVEN THE HULK IS IMPERVIOUS TO THE PAIN CAUSED BY THE FIERCE, FRICTIONAL HEAT OF RE-ENTRY!

HE FALLS, BLAZING TO EARTH LIKE A COMET...

...OR, IRONICALLY, LIKE A **SHOOTING STAR!**

A NEWLY-FORMED CRATER SERVES NOTICE THAT THE HULK HAS RETURNED!

CLUTCHING HIM TO HER CRUSHED STONE BOSOM, MOTHER EARTH SOOTHES HER WAYWARD SON WITH SLEEP!

SLEEP, WHICH THE POETS CLAIM SOOTHES THE TORTURED SOUL, CAN ALSO BRING ABOUT VARIOUS PHYSIOLOGICAL CHANGES IN THE MAN-MONSTER KNOWN AS THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

HIS PULSE SLOWS--HIS BREATHING BECOMES MORE EVEN!

HIS HEARTBEAT RATE LEVELS OFF, AS HIS ALL-CONSUMING RAGE DIMINISHES--

--AND THAT AWESOME TRANSFORMATION, OF WHICH NO POET HAS EVER DARED DREAM, TAKES PLACE!

THE HULK IS BANISHED! BRUCE BANNER RETURNS FROM A REALM OF NIGHTMARE!

ALAS, HE CANNOT KNOW THAT HIS NOCTURNAL ORDEAL HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN!

MEANWHILE, IN THE DESERT NEARBY--

UTRECHT INDUSTRIES

--A CAR STOPS OUTSIDE A DARKENED BUILDING.

THE CAR'S OCCUPANTS PASS THROUGH THE MAIN GATE BY MEANS OF VOICEPRINT IDENTIFICATION! CLEARLY, THEY BELONG HERE!

ONCE INSIDE, THEY MAKE THEIR WAY DOWN THESE QUIET CORRIDORS...

...TO **THIS** ROOM!

MISSION CONTROL

LET US EAVESDROP NOW, THAT WE MAY LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE FOUR INDIVIDUALS!

UTRECHT, I THINK YOUR MILLIONS MUST'VE AFFECTED YOUR ***MIND!*** YOU'RE CRAZY, ATTEMPTING A MANNED SPACE FLIGHT IN AN ***UNSHIELDED SHIP!***

I THINK MIKE MISSES THE POINT OF OUR VOYAGE, SIMON. PERHAPS YOU'D BETTER EXPLAIN?

HECK, SIS! IF THE BIG APE COULD ***DESIGN*** AND ***BUILD*** A SHIP WITHOUT GUESSING ITS PURPOSE, I DON'T THINK EXPLAINING WILL HELP!

MIKE STEEL--SCIENTIST & PILOT

ANN DARNELL--LIFE-SUPPORT SPECIALIST

SIMON UTRECHT--MILLIONAIRE

JIMMY DARNELL--FUEL-PROPULSION ENGINEER

LOOK, UTRECHT! YA PAY ME--I DO A JOB! YA WANTED A SHIP BUILT WITHOUT SHIELDING--I BUILT YA ONE!

BUT I NEVER SUSPECTED YA ACTUALLY MEANT TA GO ***UP*** IN THE BLASTED THING!!

WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU WERE BUILDING THEN, STEEL-- A ***TOY,*** FOR A RICH MAN'S AMUSEMENT?

IT'S NO TOY! ITS PURPOSE IS NOT TO FLY UNMANNED TO THE STARS--BUT TO EXPOSE ITS ***CREW*** TO ***COSMIC RAYS!***

YEARS AGO, A SIMILAR FOURSOME GATHERED ON A NIGHT SUCH AS THIS! THEIR GOAL--TO FLY A SHIP TO THE MOON!

FANTASTIC FOUR

THEY NEVER REACHED THEIR DESTINATION! COSMIC RAYS PENETRATED THEIR SHIP-- THEIR VERY ***CELLS***--TRANSFORMING THEM INTO ***THE FANTASTIC FOUR!***

DON'T YOU SEE, MIKE? SIMON HASN'T SPENT ALL HIS OWN DOUGH SIMPLY TO EXPLORE SPACE--THAT'S ***NASA'S*** JOB! HE WANTS TO DUPLICATE THAT FIRST FLIGHT OF THE ***FANTASTIC FOUR'S*** WITH EVEN LESS SHIELDING, SO THAT ***WE*** CAN GAIN ***SUPER POWERS***, TOO!

EXACTLY, JIMMY--IF NOT FOR PRECISELY THE SAME REASONS!

THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE THE CLASSIC GOOD SAMARITANS--SELFLESSLY SERVING OTHERS! THEY HAVE NEVER REALIZED THEIR ***TRUE*** POTENTIAL!

I--POSSESSING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS, HAVING HELD POLITICAL OFFICE--CRAVE ***POWER!*** POWER FOR POWER'S SAKE! I WISH TO BE ABLE TO DO WHAT NO HUMAN HAS ***EVER*** DONE BEFORE!

YOU'RE NOT GOING WITHOUT MY BROTHER AND ME, SIMON!

AS YOUR PROPULSION AND LIFE-SUPPORT ENGINEERS, THIS FLIGHT COULD MAKE US MORE THAN MERELY FAMOUS!

BY SERVING ME WELL, YOU HAVE EARNED YOUR PLACE ABOARD! WELL, STEEL? THE DARNELLS HAVE MADE THEIR CHOICE! WE STILL NEED A PILOT, BUT, IF YOU'RE AFRAID...

AFRAID?! THERE AIN'T NUTHIN' ***IN*** THIS WORLD OR ***OUT*** OF IT THAT FRIGHTENS ***MIKE STEEL!***

I'LL FLY YOUR SHIP, UTRECHT!

DONNING SPACESUITS, THE LITTLE GROUP FOLLOWS A DETERMINED SIMON UTRECHT OUT ONTO THE LAUNCH PAD!

MOMENTS LATER, THE THUNDER OF IGNITING ROCKET FUEL ROLLS ACROSS THE DESERT!

THE SLEEK SILVER SHIP RISES... AND A SLEEPER AWAKES!

WHERE HAS THE HULK BROUGHT ME THIS TIME? TO A MISSILE TESTING SITE?!

BRUCE BANNER IS A SCIENTIST! HE MAY NOT KNOW WHERE HE IS, BUT HE DOES KNOW WHAT HE IS WITNESSING!

WHA--?! JUDGING BY THAT ROCKET'S CONFIGURATION AND TRAJECTORY IT CAN ONLY BE A SPACE FLIGHT!

IT WAS LAUNCHED FROM THAT FACILITY! *UTRECHT INDUSTRIES?*

SIMON UTRECHT IS AN AMERICAN INDUSTRIALIST--A RIVAL OF TONY STARK!

UTRECHT INDUST

UNLESS THE HULK'S LANDED ME ON A DESERT ISLAND, I MUST BE IN THE U.S.A.!

FINDING NO GUARDS TO BAR HIS PATH, BRUCE BANNER MAKES HIS WAY TO THE MISSION CONTROL ROOM!

NO PERSONNEL--MILITARY OR CIVILIAN! THE WHOLE LAUNCH IS BEING RUN AND RECORDED BY COMPUTERS!

TRACKING SATELLITES HAVE A FIX ON US--WE'RE RIGHT ON COURSE!

NATURALLY! UTRECHT INDUSTRIES DESIGNS THE MOST ACCURATE FLIGHT COMPUTERS IN THE WORLD!

LIFE-SUPPORT SYSTEMS ON LINE--PURER AIR THAN YOU'D GET IN LOS ANGELES!

OXYGEN

NITROGE

HELI

THOUGH THAT'S NOT SAYING MUCH!

THIS SUCKER'S GUZZLING FUEL FASTER THAN A CADILLAC AT A GAS PUMP!

FUEL

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, KID! THE FUEL'S ONLY GOTTA LAST LONG ENOUGH TA CARRY US THROUGH THE *COSMIC STORM AREA* AN' BACK!

COSMIC STORM--? THE INSTRUMENTS SHOW COSMIC RAY ACTIVITY TO BE AT ITS PEAK! WHY DIDN'T THEY POSTPONE THE LAUNCH UNTIL IT WAS OVER?!

WATCHING FROM EARTH, BRUCE BANNER CAN'T CONCEIVE THAT EXPOSURE TO COSMIC RAYS IS THE ENTIRE REASON FOR THIS FLIGHT.

RAC TAC TAC TAC

HEAR THAT SOUND, UTRECHT?! IT'S THE COSMIC RAYS!

COULD THEY POSSIBLY HAVE GONE UP WITHOUT ADEQUATE SHIELDING--AFTER ALL THAT'S BEEN DISCOVERED ABOUT THE DANGEROUS EFFECTS OF COSMIC RAYS?!?

THIS IS IT, KIDDIES! WE'RE IN THE HEART OF THE COSMIC STORM AREA!

THEY'RE PENETRATING THE SHIP--BUT I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING!

THAT'S 'CAUSE THEY'RE ONLY RAYS OF LIGHT, SIS! WE CAN'T FEEL 'EM--BUT THEY'LL AFFECT US JUST THE SAME!

CAN'T... MOVE MY... ARMS! IT'S LIKE... WHOLE **MASS** OF SHIP... IS ON MY SHOULDERS!

SIMON! I STUMBLED BACK INTO THE LIFE-SUPPORT CYLINDERS--CRACKED THEIR CASINGS!

BUT **SIMON UTRECHT,** HE WHO ENGINEERED THIS VOYAGE TO THE EDGE OF SANITY, CANNOT ANSWER!

LINKED TO THE SHIP'S COMPUTERS AS THE COSMIC RAYS INVADE HIS CELLS, HE SUDDENLY FINDS HIS BRAIN BENUMBED BY A MASS OF DATA!

IT'S STARTING! I-I FEEL LIKE I'M **AGLOW** WITH POWER!

THEIR MIXTURE OF **GASES** IS FLOODING MY SUIT--MY LUNGS!

IT IS AS IF, INDEPENDENTLY OF HIS SHIP, HE IS VECTORING A SOLO COURSE TOWARDS THE STARS!

IN THE MISSION CONTROL ROOM ON EARTH, BRUCE BANNER MAKES A FATEFUL DECISION!

THE CREW IS HELPLESS! COSMIC RAYS ARE BOMBARDING THEIR CHROMOSOMES! ANOTHER FEW MINUTES UP THERE AND THEY'LL BE *DEAD!*

I'VE GOT TO RE-PROGRAM THE FLIGHT-CONTROL COMPUTERS TO BRING THEM BACK FROM THERE!

WORKING FURIOUSLY, DR. BANNER ENCODES THE CORRECT RE-ENTRY COORDINATES--

--THEN RACES OUT TO WITNESS THE FRUITS OF HIS LABOR!

THE SHIP SHOULD BE RE-ENTERING EARTH'S UPPER ATMOSPHERE JUST ABOUT...

"...NOW!"

SMASH

NO! THE AUTOMATIC RE-ENTRY SYSTEM MALFUNCTIONED!

NOTHING HUMAN COULD HAVE SURVIVED SUCH A CRASH!

NO, BRUCE BANNER! NOTHING...*HUMAN!*

BUT THEN, SIMON UTRECHT AND HIS CREW HAVE GONE **BEYOND** HUMANITY!

I HAD HOPED TO BRING YOU BACK BEFORE OVEREXPOSURE TO COSMIC RAYS ALTERED YOUR GENETIC STRUCTURE--BUT I WAS TOO LATE!

YOU'VE CHANGED! YOU'RE NO LONGER HUMAN BEINGS! YOUR COSMIC RAY-FLOODED CELLS HAVE MADE YOU SOMETHING... ***DIFFERENT!***

YOU INTERFERED IN OUR SHIP'S FLIGHT-PROGRAM?! YOU BROUGHT US BACK BEFORE WE COULD ABSORB EVEN MORE COSMIC RAYS -- BEFORE WE COULD BECOME EVEN MORE POWERFUL?!?

YOU MEAN YOU DID THIS TO YOURSELVES... DELIBERATELY?!

YOU MAKE IT SOUND AS IF IT WERE MADNESS TO SEEK AFTER POWER! PERHAPS IT IS, WHEN THE QUEST ENDS IN FAILURE!

BUT WE HAVE ATTAINED THAT POWER WHICH WE SOUGHT! BEHOLD THE ABILITIES OF... VECTOR!

WITH BUT A GESTURE, THE BEING ONCE KNOWN AS SIMON UTRECHT MOVES A STONE FROM WHERE IT LAY ON THE SAND!

THEN, GUIDING IT THROUGH A SERIES OF INTRICATE SPIRALS--

--HE SENDS IT SMASHING INTO THE STARTLED BRUCE BANNER!

UNNGHH!

SO SIMPLY-- SO EFFORTLESSLY, I STRIKE YOU DOWN!

AND YET, WHAT GREATER ACTS COULD WE HAVE PERFORMED IF YOU HADN'T INTERFERED!

N-NOXIOUS GASES--CHOKING ME--FILLING MY LUNGS!

WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU EXPECT FROM AN ENCOUNTER WITH... VAPOR!

UTRECHT! ANN! YOU'VE BOTH GAINED WEIRD POWERS--

BUT LOOK AT ME!! I'VE TAKEN ON THE MASS OF THE SHIP-- BECOME A WALKING METAL MONSTER-- AN IRONCLAD!

MAYBE IT WOULDA BEEN DIFFERENT IF YOU HADN'T BROUGHT THE SHIP BACK BEFORE THE COSMIC RAYS WERE FINISHED WITH ME!

WHO KNOWS *WHAT* WE WOULD HAVE BECOME IF HE HADN'T BUTTED IN! HOLD HIM, BIG FELLA--WHILE I GIVE HIM AN *X-RAY* TREATMENT!

AGLOW WITH THE RADIOACTIVE FORCES BEAMED AT HIM BY THE YOUNGEST MEMBER OF SIMON UTRECHT'S TRANSFORMED TEAM, BRUCE BANNER WRITHES IN SILENT AGONY!

THEN, HIS STRUGGLES CEASE, AND HE GOES LIMP IN THE ARMS OF IRONCLAD!

HE'S DEAD! WE'VE KILLED HIM!

WE'RE MURDERERS--BUT WHAT DOES IT MATTER? LIKE HE SAID, WE AIN'T HUMAN ANYMORE! THERE AIN'T NO LAWS WE HAVE TO OBEY--NO PRISONS THAT COULD HOLD US!

YOU WERE RIGHT, UTRECHT! WE'RE MORE POWERFUL THAN I EVER COULDA DREAMED POSSIBLE--STRONGER, MAYBE, THAN EVEN THE *FANTASTIC FOUR!*

WE NEED A NAME--SOMETHIN' THAT SUGGESTS HOW MIGHTY WE ARE--SOMETHIN' THAT PUTS US AT ODDS WITH THE HUMAN RACE!

THIS WAS YOUR IDEA, UTRECHT--SO I VOTE WE NAME OURSELVES AFTER *YOU!* I SAY WE CALL OURSELVES... *THE U-FOES!*

HUH? SUDDENLY THIS GUY'S CORPSE IS TURNIN' GREEN--GETTING TOO HEAVY TO HOLD!

HULK DOES NOT *WANT* TO BE HELD, METAL-MAN!

HULK WILL MAKE YOU LET HIM *GO!!*

FWAP!

HOLY CRUD! TH-THAT SKINNY GUY WE THOUGHT WE ACED WAS REALLY THE *HULK*?!

WHAT A FOOL I WAS NOT TO RECOGNIZE *BRUCE BANNER!* THAT ACCOUNTS FOR HOW A HALF-NAKED STRANGER, STUMBLING OUT OF THE DESERT, POSSESSED THE SCIENTIFIC KNOW-HOW TO RE-PROGRAM OUR FLIGHT COMPUTERS!

BANNER! *BANNER! BANNER!!*

HULK *HATES* THAT NAME!

HULK KNOWS WHO YOU ARE NOW! YOU ARE *FRIENDS* OF BANNER! HE TRIED TO *SAVE* YOU! THAT MUST BE WHY YOU ATTACK HULK!

SOARING AHEAD OF THE HURLED NOSECONE, X-RAY SUPERHEATS THE METAL WITH A BURST OF RADIATION-- REDUCING IT TO MOLTEN SLAG! BUT...

A FAT LOT OF GOOD *THAT* DID! THE THING'S STILL COMING AT MY PARTNERS--

--ONLY NOW IT'S *WHITE-HOT!*

DON'T WORRY ABOUT *ME,* JIMMY! I'VE ONLY TO TURN TO A GASEOUS STATE AGAIN TO ALLOW THE FIREBALL TO PASS THROUGH ME!

AND FOR VECTOR, IT IS A SIMPLE MATTER TO DEFLECT THE FIRE-BALL IN ITS FLIGHT, DIVERTING IT...

ARRH! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, UTRECHT? I THOUGHT WE WAS ON THE SAME SIDE!

USE YOUR HEAD, STEEL! THE SUPER-HEATED SLAG CANNOT HARM YOUR METAL FORM--

--BUT IT CAN RAISE YOUR SURFACE TEMPERATURE, MAKING YOUR VERY *TOUCH* DEADLY TO THE HULK!

YEAH! THE HULK MAY BE THICK-SKINNED BUT HE AIN'T HEAT PROOF!

METAL-MAN IS ON *FIRE*?!

THAT'S RIGHT, GREENSKIN--AN' I MEAN TA SHARE THE WEALTH!

SSSSS

ARRGH! METAL-MAN IS HOT! HE *BURNS* HULK'S SKIN!

GET OFF HULK, METAL-MAN!

TRY AN' MAKE ME, YA GREEN GARGOYLE!

OR CAN'T YA DO NOTHIN' AGAINST AN ENEMY WHO CAN INCREASE HIS *BODY-MASS*--

--PINNIN' YA INTO THE *DIRT*!

METAL-MAN IS... HEAVY... FORCING HULK... DOWN!

BUT HULK...WILL NOT...*STAY* DOWN!

HULK IS STRONGER THAN METAL-MAN! HULK IS STRONGER THAN ANYBODY!

HULK IS THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!!

U-FOES--DO SOMETHIN'! I CAN'T HOLD HIM ANYMORE!

NO ONE CAN HOLD HULK WHEN HULK DOES NOT WANT TO BE HELD, METAL-MAN!

AND HULK DOES NOT WANT TO HOLD *YOU!!*

IRONCLAD--HURTLING RIGHT AT ME?!

REACTING INSTINCTIVELY, VECTOR RAISES ONE HAND--PALM OUTWARDS--TOWARDS HIS HELPLESS TEAMMATE...AND DEFLECTS IRONCLAD AWAY!

UTRECHT, WHY DIDN'T YA STOP ME?!

I-I WAS AFRAID YOU'D STRIKE ME--!

THEIR COSMIC RAY-SPAWNED POWERS BEING NEW TO THEM, THE U-FOES ARE UNDERSTANDABLY CLUMSY IN THEIR USE!

BUT TRY EXPLAINING THAT TO THE AGONIZED IRONCLAD!

ARRGHH! KID--TURN YOUR RADIATION OFF! IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE FRYIN' MY ATOMS!

I-I'M SORRY, MIKE! I-IT WAS JUST REFLEX--!

ENOUGH! THIS IS ALL THE HULK'S FAULT! THAT MAN-MONSTER'S GOT US HURTING EACH OTHER IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO STOP *HIM!*

X-RAY WILL MAKE YOU *PAY* FOR THAT GREENSKIN!

HOWEVER, BEFORE X-RAY CAN LAUNCH HIS NEXT ASSAULT-- HIS MIST-LIKE SISTER BEATS HIM TO THE PUNCH!

YOU MAY STRIKE THE OTHERS, HULK-- BUT YOU CANNOT STRIKE ONE WHOSE FORM YOU CANNOT TOUCH!

BUT, BY TRANSFORMING MY ATOMS INTO THOSE OF AN ACRID, SEARING *MUSTARD GAS-- VAPOR* CAN HARM YOU!

ARRHH! GIRL FLOATS ALL AROUND HULK--MAKING IT HARD FOR HULK TO BREATHE!

ANN! DON'T TACKLE THAT CREATURE ALONE! LET ME HELP!

NO! ALL I'VE DONE IS DEFLECT VAPOR AWAY FROM THE HULK-- FREEING HIM FROM HER POISON CLOUD!

HUNH! HULK CAN BREATHE WITHOUT CHOKING!

DEFLECTED TOWARDS HER BROTHER BY THE POWER OF VECTOR, VAPOR DESPERATELY TRANSFORMS HER ATOMS ONCE AGAIN!

DON'T WORRY, X-RAY! I'LL SIMPLY SHIFT FROM MY POISON GASEOUS STATE TO BECOME SIMPLE HYDROGEN!

ANN, NO! MY RADIOACTIVE BODY IS SUPER HOT-- AND HYDROGEN BURNS!

JIMMY!!

HOLY--! ANN'S ON FIRE!

SWIRLING HELPLESSLY ON THE AIR CURRENTS--THE GAS MOLECULES OF **VAPOR'S** BODY BURN BRILLIANTLY, CAUSING HER OVERWHELMING PAIN...

UTRECHT, ANN'S BURNIN' OUTTA CONTROL! WE GOTTA HELP HER!

TO REACH HER WE'VE FIRST GOT TO FIGHT PAST THE HULK!

THEN LET'S HIT THAT GREEN GORILLA WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT!

VECTOR IS THE FIRST TO STRIKE!

ARRGH! SKINNY MAN POINTS--AND STONES FLY UP OUT OF GROUND TO SMASH AT HULK.

NOW, JIMMY-- WHILE THE HULK'S OFF-BALANCE--FOCUS YOUR POWER AND BOMBARD HIM WITH A CONCENTRATED X-RAY BEAM!

JUST X-RAYS, SIMON? I CAN THROW ANY KIND OF RADIO-ACTIVE RAYS AT THAT CREATURE YOU'D LIKE--ALL OF WHICH ARE GUARANTEED TO PRODUCE A MASSIVE DOSE OF **RADIATION POISONING!**

GRAARRGHHH!

THAT'S IT, KID-- NOW WE'RE WORKIN' AS A TEAM! YOU SOFTEN HIM UP-- AN' I'LL POUND HIM FLAT!

INDEED, IT SEEMS THE U-FOES' ADJUSTMENT TO THEIR POWER MAY SPELL THE END FOR THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

BUT FORTUNE, IT SEEMS, SMILES FAVORABLY ON THE JADE GIANT!

SIMON, I--I'VE FINALLY BROUGHT MY GASEOUS STATE UNDER CONTROL! THE FIRE IS OUT!

BUT I'M SO...UN-STEADY!

POOR ANN--YOU HAVE SUFFERED MOST IN THIS CLASH! COME, LET ME COMFORT YOU!

S-SIMON, I--I CAN'T COME NEAR YOU!!

MY POWER TO DE-FLECT--TO VECTOR OBJECTS THROUGH SPACE--IS DRIVING YOU AWAY FROM ME!

I-I CAN'T TOUCH YOU--CAN'T GET NEAR YOU! MY COSMIC RAY ABILITY IS TURNING INTO A *MIDAS CURSE!*

WITH THAT STARTLING REVELATION, BEGINS...THE **END!**

METAL-MAN AND GLOWING MAN WANT TO FIGHT SO BAD--THEN GO! FIGHT EACH OTHER!

X-RAY, LOOK OUT! THE HULK'S HURLIN' ME RIGHT AT YA!

YOUR MASS IS STRIKING QUANTA OF ENERGY OFF ME IN THE FORM OF PHOTONS!

ALTHOUGH THEIR IMPACT HAS CAUSED X-RAY TO SHED SOME OF HIS SUB-ATOMIC SUBSTANCE, IT IS CLEARLY IRONCLAD WHO HAS RECEIVED THE WORST OF THEIR CRASH!

ARRGH! WHAT'D YA DO TA ME, KID! I FEEL LIKE I'M ON FIRE--BURNING UP FROM INSIDE!

OH, NO! THE SLIGHTEST CONTACT WITH ME AND IRONCLAD'S SUFFERING FROM SEVERE RADIATION POISONING!!

GET AWAY FROM HIM, X-RAY--QUICKLY!

H-HOW CAN WE FIGHT AS A TEAM IF WE CAN'T EVEN COME *NEAR* EACH OTHER?!

UNAWARE OF THE U-FOES' PLIGHT, THE RAGING HULK RUSHES TO RESUME THE BATTLE!

ROCKET-PEOPLE HAVE HURT HULK! THEY BURNED HIM AND CHOKED HIM--TRIED TO CRUSH HIM AND THREW STONES AT HIM!

NOW *HULK* WILL--!

HUNH?!?

WHAT'S HAPPENING...? FEEL SO STRANGE!

ROCKET-PEOPLE DO NOT LOOK LIKE THEY WANT TO FIGHT ANYMORE!

I CAN'T... GET UP... OFF GROUND!

I FEEL SO DIZZY--SO...UNFOCUSED!

I'M SHIFTING TO MY VAPOR-STATE AGAIN--AGAINST MY WILL!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME, UTRECHT? WHY CAN'T I CONTROL MY *MASS*?! IT'S INCREASING WITH EACH PASSING SECOND--DRIVING ME DEEPER INTO THE GROUND!

I--CAN'T HELP YOU--IRONCLAD! MY POWER IS--DEFLECTING THE VERY MOLECULES OF THE AIR--AWAY FROM ME! I CAN'T--*BREATHE!*

SIMON, I'M DISSIPATING! BLOWING APART IN THE BREEZE!

I-I CAN'T HOLD MY ATOMS *TOGETHER!*

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY TEAMMATES, MONSTER? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO THEM?!

HUNH! GLOWING MAN KNOWS HULK HAS DONE NOTHING!

TH-THEN IT'S THE *COSMIC RAYS!* THEY NEVER STOPPED CHANGING US!

WE GOT A BIGGER DOSE THAN THE FANTASTIC FOUR EVER DID!

OUR POWERS ARE *INCREASING* BEYOND THE POINT WHERE WE CAN CONTROL THEM!

AGGHH! I-I'M ON FIRE INSIDE! MY VERY ATOMS ARE DECAYING!

I'M *DYING*--POISONED BY MY OWN *RADIATION!*

GLOWING MAN HAS BURNED HIMSELF OUT!

TURNING TO SURVEY THE REMAINING U-FOES, THE HULK FINDS THAT IRONCLAD HAS BEEN ENTIRELY SWALLOWED BY THE EARTH!

HIS INCREASING MASS DRIVING HIM EVER DEEPER, HE WILL EITHER PERISH ONCE HE REACHES THE MOLTEN CORE--

--OR, BE TRAPPED THERE FOREVER--A PRISONER OF HIS OWN POWER!

VAPOR, TRYING TO SAVE VECTOR BY CONVERTING HER DISSIPATING ATOMS TO BREATHABLE OXYGEN, SACRIFICES HERSELF IN VAIN!

HIS DEFLECTIVE POWERS SCATTER HER TO THE WIND!

THEN, VECTOR HIMSELF GASPS AND COLLAPSES FROM LACK OF AIR! HIS POWER CONTINUES TO VECTOR OBJECTS AWAY FROM HIM EVEN THEN--

--AND, AS THE HULK WATCHES IN MUTE ASTONISHMENT, VECTOR'S BODY CONTINUES TO DEFLECT ITSELF FROM THE EARTH, DRIVING SIMON UTRECHT OUT INTO SPACE!

HULK DID NOT EVEN HAVE TO SMASH ROCKET-PEOPLE! THEY SMASHED THEMSELVES!

BUT THEIR LEADER HAS DONE WHAT HULK COULD *NOT* DO--!

HE HAS REACHED...

THE STARS!

DON'T MISS THE INCREDIBLE HULK #255 THE HULK BATTLES THE MIGHTY THOR IN

THUNDER IN A TWO-MILE TUNNEL!

50¢ CC

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THE INCREDIBLE HULK®

TM

OL' GREENSKIN BATTLES THOR GOD OF THUNDER! 'NUFF SAID!

BUCKLER & MILGROM

Caught in the heart of a ***Nuclear Explosion,*** victim of ***Gamma-Radiation*** gone wild, ***Doctor Robert Bruce Banner*** now finds himself transformed in times of stress into seven feet, one thousand pounds of unfettered ***Fury***—the most powerful creature to ever walk the earth—

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INCREDIBLE HULK!®

BILL MANTLO WORDS | SAL BUSCEMA PICTURES | JOE ROSEN LETTERS | BOB SHAREN COLORS | AL MILGROM & JIM SHOOTER EDITORS

THUNDER UNDER The EAST RIVER!

*AND IF OUR TITLE DOESN'T GIVE AWAY THE IDENTITY OF THIS ISSUE'S PULSE-POUNDING **GUEST-STAR**...NOTHING WILL!*

HE IS TIRED, THIS GREAT GREEN GOLIATH KNOWN AS THE INCREDIBLE HULK. HE IS TIRED, BUT HIS RAGE HAS DRIVEN HIM EVER EASTWARD TO THESE NEW JERSEY CLIFFS OVERLOOKING THE MAJESTIC HUDSON RIVER...AND THE GREAT CITY OF NEW YORK.

THE HULK IS ONLY VAGUELY AWARE OF HIS REASONS FOR COMING HERE.

THE REASONING PART OF HIS MIND -- USUALLY ASSOCIATED WITH HIS HATED ALTER-EGO, BRUCE BANNER -- BECOMES SUBMERGED WHEN RAGE TRIGGERS BANNER'S TRANSFORMATION INTO THE HULK.

THE HULK DOES NOT KNOW THAT HE IS BANNER.

TO THE BESTIAL BEHEMOTH, BANNER IS AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY, SOMEONE WHO IS CONSTANTLY TRYING TO CONTROL THE HULK.

SOMETIMES THE GREEN-SKINNED GOLIATH FEELS THE NEED TO ESCAPE -- TO LOSE HIMSELF...

...AND WHAT BETTER PLACE TO LOSE ONESELF THAN AMONG THE MASSED MEN AND MACHINERY OF A MODERN DAY METROPOLIS LIKE NEW YORK?

HE MOVES ONWARD, OBLIVIOUS OF THE PANIC HIS MERE PRESENCE CAUSES.

MAYBE HULK SHOULD NOT COME HERE! ALL HE EVER FINDS IN CITY IS TROUBLE.

BUT, THEN, HULK FINDS TROUBLE WHEREVER HE GOES.

CHARLIE, THERE'S SOMEBODY ON THE EXPRESS-WAY!

IDIOT! DOESN'T HE KNOW HE'S GONNA GET HIT! OMIGOSH, HE-- IT'S GOT GREEN SKIN!

I-IT'S THE HULK!

AS IF POSSESSED OF ONE MIND, THE TERRIFIED COMMUTERS FLEE THEIR CARS, ABANDONING THEM BEFORE THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE TOLL GATE.

EW YORK!

BRIDGE TOLL $1.50

RUN FROM HULK, PUNY HUMANS. HULK DOES NOT CARE WHAT YOU DO--

-- AS LONG AS YOU STAY OUT OF HULK'S WAY!

HELLO, BRIDGE CONTROL? WE'VE GOT A GATE-CRASHER AT THE TOLL STATION! A *GREEN* GATE-CRASHER!

WHAT MAKE? WHAT LICENSE NUMBER?

I- I DON'T THINK YOU UNDERSTAND--!

*THE PANIC SURGES ABOUT HIM! THE SCREAMS, THE HONKING HORNS. THE CACAPHONY OF CHAOS, LITERALLY CAUSE THE GREAT GREEN GOLIATH TO SEE **RED**!*

PLEASE PAY $1.50

THANK YOU

KERWHOOM

MOST OF US ACCEPT SOCIETY'S LITTLE ANNOYANCES FOR THE SAKE OF PRESERVING ORDER.

BUT THE INCREDIBLE HULK IS ONE OF SOCIETY'S OUTCASTS.

THANK YOU

TO HIM, THE RULES ARE MEANINGLESS.

THE EASTBOUND LANES OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE'S UPPER ROADWAY ARE HIS NOW...

...BUT HE DOES NOT CROSS OVER UNCONTESTED!

STAND YOUR GROUND, YOU MONSTER!

YOU HEARD ME, HULK! DON'T COME ANY CLOSER OR I'LL ORDER MY MEN TO ATTACK!

N.Y.

WORDS WILL NOT STOP HULK! GUNS WILL NOT STOP HULK!

NOTHING WILL STOP HULK!

KEEPING THE HULK OUT OF THE CITY IS MY RESPONSIBILITY! I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE...

FIRE!

IMMEDIATELY, THE DISCHARGING WEAPONRY LIGHTS UP THE BRIDGE AND THE RIVER BELOW IN A MANNER NOT UNLIKE THE FIREWORKS DISPLAY ON THE FOURTH OF JULY.

THESE ARE ARMOR-PIERCING SHELLS. ABANDONED CARS LEFT ON THE BRIDGE ARE SHREDDED.

BUT THE INCREDIBLE HULK WADES THROUGH THE FIRESTORM UNHARMED!

BLUECOATS CANNOT TELL THE HULK WHERE HULK CANNOT GO!

HE'S TEARING APART OUR BARRICADE...WITH HIS *BARE HANDS!!*

THE POLICE OFFICER'S EXCLAMATION OF AMAZEMENT--

--IS DECIDEDLY AN UNDERSTATEMENT!

AN ALERT'S GONE OUT TO THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* AND THE *AVENGERS*-- BUT, UNTIL THEY GET HERE, IT'S UP TO US TO STOP HIM!

BULLETS AND SHELLS ARE USELESS AGAINST HIS THICK HIDE! LET'S TRY *TEAR GAS!*

PWOOM

PWOOM

NYPD

PFWOOM

GREAT ACRID CLOUDS OF BILLOWING GAS BLOW ACROSS THE BRIDGE, HIDING THE HULK FROM SIGHT.

WHEN, AT LAST, THEY CLEAR--THE COPS FIND THAT THEIR QUARRY IS...GONE!

WE--WE DID IT! WE'VE BLOWN HIM AWAY!!

DON'T BE A FOOL! THE HULK MUST'VE USED THE GAS AS COVER TO LEAP PAST US! WE'VE GOT TO PUT OUT AN ALL-POINTS ALERT AT ONCE!

THE HULK IS LOOSE IN UPPER MANHATTAN!

AS THE GUARDIANS OF THE LAW FAN OUT FROM THE GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE, EYES SCANNING THE STREETS OF A SLEEPING NEW YORK CITY...

...NO ONE THINKS TO LOOK DOWN ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE BRIDGE'S GREAT PYLONS.

THERE, THE VERY OBJECT OF THEIR MONSTER-HUNT CLAMBERS FROM GIRDER TO GIRDER.

THE HULK HAS LOST INTEREST IN THE INSANITY ABOVE.

WHAT HAS ATTRACTED HIS ATTENTION IS A SMALL STRUCTURE, LOST IN THE SHADOWS AT THE GREAT BRIDGE'S BASE.

IT IS A LANDMARK, IMMORTALIZED IN A FAMOUS CHILDREN'S STORY.

THE HULK COULDN'T CARE LESS.

ALL HE WANTS IS A NIGHT'S REST INSIDE THE *LITTLE RED LIGHTHOUSE!*

HE IS NOT, IT SEEMS, ALONE IN HIS QUEST.

HUNH! WHO ARE YOU, MAN? HULK ALMOST STEPPED ON YOU!

DON'T LET IT FRET YA, FRIEND. SOMEBODY'S ALWAYS WALKIN' ON CARL PFOTTS.

I GUESS YA COULD SAY IT'S BEEN THE STORY OF MY LIFE.

MAN IS NOT AFRAID OF HULK?

AFRAID? NAH! YOU LOOK KINDA STRANGE, BUT THIS HOOCH MAKES EVER'BODY SEEM GREEN. YOU LOOKIN' FOR A PLACE TO SLEEP?

YES.

ME, TOO. THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE-- HOPPED OFF A FREIGHT TRAIN WHEN I SAW THE PLACE. REMEMBER IT FROM SOME BOOK I READ AS A KID.

BUT THEY'VE WELDED THE DOOR SHUT-- TA KEEP THE LOCAL JUNKIES FROM TURNIN' IT INTA A HANGOUT, I GUESS.

MAN WANTS TO SLEEP INSIDE AND HULK WANTS TO SLEEP INSIDE--DOOR WILL NOT KEEP US OUT!

HOO-EE! NO, I GUESS IT WON'T!

SKRAK

SHOOT, IT SURE IS BLACK AS PITCH IN HERE! YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TA HAVE A MATCH ON YA, BY ANY CHANCE?

NO. HULK DOES NOT HAVE A MATCH.

WE'RE BROTHERS IN POVERTY, THEN. WELL, COME ON-- IT'S LIGHTER UPSTAIRS.

MOVING UP THE CREAKING SPIRAL STAIRCASE, THE HULK AND THE HOBO SOON COME TO THE TOP OF THE TINY LIGHTHOUSE.

THAT'S BETTER, EH? NOW IF WE ONLY HAD SOME GRUB, WE COULD HAVE US A COOKOUT UNDER THE STARS.

GRUB?

YER PULLIN' MY LEG, RIGHT? I MEAN, NOBODY'S ***THAT*** GREEN, THAT THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT GRUB IS -- FILET MIGNON, DUCK A L'ORANGE, LOBSTER TAILS SWIMMIN' IN BUTTER...

...BEANS.

DWELLING ON UNATTAINABLE DELIGHTS, THE OLD HOBO SOON DRIFTS OFF TO SLEEP..

THE NEXT MORNING ARRIVES WITH A SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT, THE SQUALL OF SEAGULLS, AND EXCEDRIN HEADACHE #9.

WHOO-EEE! THAT THUNDERBIRD CAN SURE MAKE A MAN FEEL ALIVE -- BY LETTIN' HIM KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TA BE DEAD! HEY! WHO THE HECK ARE YOU?

OH, YEAH -- THE YOUNG FELLER I MET LAST NIGHT. YA LOOK KINDA DIFFERENT, THOUGH...

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE AM I? HOW DID I GET HERE?

I INVITED YA IN TA SHARE MY HUMBLE ABODE. YA SEEMED BIGGER, AND GREENER LAST NIGHT. NOW ***I'M*** THE ONE WHO'S FEELIN' GREEN.

YOU LIVE HERE? THIS LIGHTHOUSE -- IT'S YOURS?

WELL, NOT 'XACTLY. I STAY HERE WHENEVER I ROLL INTA TOWN, BUT IT BELONGS TO THE CITY.

CITY? ***WHAT*** CITY?

IGNORING THE HOBO, BRUCE BANNER RACES TO THE EDGE OF THE LIGHTHOUSE AND STARES SOUTHWARD. THE SILVER SPIRES OF THE SKYLINE THAT MEET HIS GAZE ARE UNMISTAKEABLE.

NEW YORK! THE HULK BROUGHT ME TO ***NEW YORK CITY!***

BUT WHY? HE'S ALWAYS BEEN HATED, HUNTED, HOUNDED WHENEVER HE'S COME HERE!

I SEEM TO REMEMBER THAT THE HULK WAS TIRED! HE WANTED A CHANGE -- TO GET AWAY TO SOMEPLACE HE HOPED WOULD BE BETTER!

PERHAPS HE HAD THE RIGHT IDEA!

WHERE YA HEADED, FRIEND?

I DON'T KNOW--!

THE RUMBLE OF A PASSING FREIGHT TRAIN PROVIDES THE DAZED DR. BANNER WITH A DESTINATION.

SOUTH! I'M HEADING SOUTH!

SANTA FE

THAT'S WHERE ALL THE SHIPYARDS ARE-- THE FREIGHTERS CARRYING CARGO TO OTHER COUNTRIES!

MAYBE THE HULK WAS RIGHT. WE'VE FOUND NO PEACE HERE IN OUR OWN LAND-- MAYBE IT WILL BE DIFFERENT SOMEWHERE ELSE?

MAYBE SOMEWHERE, ON THIS GREAT GLOBE MEN CALL EARTH--

--THERE EXISTS A PLACE WHERE THE HULK AND I CAN... REST?

THE MILE-LONG FREIGHT TRAIN RUMBLES SOUTHWARD.

DOWNRIVER...

THEY COME FROM ALL OVER, DOCTOR-- RIDING THE RAILS FROM CITY TO CITY-- SOUTH IN THE WINTER, NORTH IN THE SUMMER.

FREIGHTYARD YMCA

THEY'RE CALLED BUMS, HOBOS. THEY'RE KICKED AROUND BY TRAINYARD GUARDS AND ARRESTED BY LOCAL SHERIFFS.

IN JAIL, THEY RECEIVE A HOT MEAL AND A BED, BUT THEY CAN'T STAY FOREVER. SO, AS SOON AS THEY'RE RELEASED, THEY'RE RIGHT BACK ON THE TRACKS.

AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THEY SUFFER DREADFULLY FROM MALNUTRITION, EXPOSURE...

I CAN SEE THAT, MR. MYLES, AND WHILE I *CAN* DONATE MY TIME AND SERVICES TO HEALING THEM...

YOU CAN'T FEED THEM. I KNOW, DR. BLAKE-- THAT'S *OUR* JOB, HERE AT THE FREIGHTYARD YMCA. THE CITY HAS GIVEN US THIS FACILITY TO TRY AND HELP THESE MEN.

BUT UNTIL YOU VOLUNTEERED, WE HAD NO MEDICAL CARE TO SPEAK OF. MOST DOCTORS-- WELL, LET'S JUST SAY THAT MOST DOCTORS NO LONGER MAKE HOUSE CALLS.

WHEN I TOOK MY HIPPOCRATIC OATH OF MEDICINE, I SWORE TO HELP MANKIND IN GENERAL AND IN SPECIFIC.

I CONSIDER IT MY *DUTY* TO TREAT THESE MEN WHETHER THEY CAN *PAY* ME OR NOT.

NOW, MR. MYLES, IF YOU WILL LEAD ME TO THE REST OF MY PATIENTS...?

BEARING DOWN ON HIS GNARLED WOODEN WALKING STICK, THE LAME DR. DON BLAKE PROCEEDS FROM BED TO BED. IF HE NOTICES THE TRAIN PULLING INTO THE FREIGHTYARD...

...IT IS ONLY AS THE APPROPRIATE BACKGROUND NOISE FOR THE SETTING.

I TOLD MR. MYLES AT THE YMCA CLINIC THAT I'D KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR TRAIN-HOPPERS AND BRING THEM IN FOR A MEAL.

HEY, YOU--!

I-I'D PLANNED TO LEAP OUT BEFORE THE TRAIN CAME TO A HALT, BUT I MUST HAVE DOZED OFF!

THAT GUARD-- HE'S SEEN ME!

I CAN'T LET HIM STOP ME! THE STRESS OF BEING CAUGHT--JAILED--WOULD TURN ME INTO THE HULK! MY ONLY CHANCE--NEW YORK CITY'S ONLY CHANCE--LIES IN MY GETTING *OUT* OF HERE BEFORE THAT HAPPENS!

HUH?!

HEY, FOR THE LUVVA MIKE, *WAIT!* WATCH WHERE YOU'RE RUNNING!

WHAT DOES HE MEAN, WATCH WHERE I'M--

SCREEE

--GOING...

THE POOR, FRIGHTENED SLOB! I WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP HIM--BUT IT ISN'T HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO SAVE HIM NOW!

THE TRAINYARD GUARD IS RIGHT--IT IS NOT **HUMANLY** POSSIBLE FOR BRUCE BANNER TO BE SAVED FROM THE ONCOMING LOCOMOTIVE...

...BUT THEN, BRUCE BANNER'S TERROR--ACCOMPANIED BY POUNDING HEARTBEAT AND RACING PULSE--HAS BROUGHT ABOUT THE TRANSITION FROM MAN TO MONSTER!

AND, FOR ONE WHO IS AS FAR **BEYOND** HUMAN AS THE INCREDIBLE HULK--**ANYTHING** IS POSSIBLE!

THROOM

INSIDE THE YMCA'S HOBO HAVEN, ADJOINING THE FREIGHT-YARD...

MY WORD! WHAT IN THE WORLD WAS **THAT**?!

THE ENTIRE BUILDING SHUDDERED AS IF A SHOCKWAVE HAD GONE THROUGH IT! BUT WHAT COULD HAVE CAUSED--?!

WHAT'S HAPPENED, DR. BLAKE? HAS THERE BEEN A DE-RAILMENT?

NO, MR. MYLES--SOMETHING FAR WORSE! A TRAIN HAS CRASHED, ALL RIGHT, BUT IT'S CRASHED INTO--

--THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

RUN FROM HULK, PUNY HUMANS! HULK HAS SMASHED YOUR TRAIN! BOTHER HULK, AND HE WILL SMASH YOU!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPELL IT OUT, GREENIE--WE GOT THE MESSAGE!

WE'RE GOING! WE'RE GOING!

DRAWN TO THE WINDOW BY THE RUCKUS, THE HOBOES FAIL TO NOTICE DR. DON BLAKE EASING OUT OF THE ROOM.

WHOO-EE!

THAT GUY SURE IS BIG AN' GREEN!

GLAD I WASN'T RIDIN' THE TRAIN HE JUST HIT!

I HAD HEARD THAT THE HULK RECENTLY ENDANGERED CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL CITY!

THE DAMAGE WAS ESTIMATED TO BE IN THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS!

3

LUCKILY, THE MONSTER'S RAGE HAS NEVER CLAIMED A HUMAN LIFE --

--BUT THERE IS ALWAYS A FIRST TIME, AND THIS MAY BE IT!

I'VE GOT TO STOP THE HULK BEFORE THAT HAPPENS!

THE LAME PHYSICIAN RAISES HIS WALKING STICK ABOVE HIS HEAD...

THEN, HE STRIKES IT AGAINST THE FLOOR AND IT ISSUES FORTH A BURST OF BRILLIANCE.

WITHIN THE GLOW, DR. DON BLAKE CEASES TO EXIST...

...AND IN HIS PLACE STANDS

THE MIGHTY THOR

GOD OF THUNDER!

OFTTIMES HAVE I PITTED MY STRENGTH IN BATTLE AGAINST THE GREEN-SKINNED GOLIATH... WITH NO CLEAR-CUT DECISION AS TO WHICH OF US BE THE MIGHTIER!

PERHAPS *THIS* DAY, IF BATTLE BE JOINED, A TRUE VICTOR WILL EMERGE!

AS THE MAN HAS BECOME THE IMMORTAL, SO TOO HAS THE CLOTHING OF DR. BLAKE GIVEN WAY TO THE COSTUME OF THOR... AND THE FRAIL-SEEMING WALKING STICK HAS CHANGED TO THE MIGHTY, ASGARD*-FORGED URU MALLET WIELDED BY THE SON OF ODIN!

ONCE, AS AVENGERS, THE HULK AND I DID FIGHT SIDE BY SIDE 'GAINST THE EVIL OF MY HALF-BROTHER LOKI!

TIME HAS INCREASED THE HULK'S SAVAGERY!

THOUGH I PITY THE GREEN-SKINNED ONE HIS UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE, I CANNOT LET HIM RUN AMOK AMONGST HELPLESS HUMANS!

*HOME OF THE NORSE GODS-- ARCH-DEITY AL.

MEANWHILE, IN THE FREIGHTYARD...

WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE, PUNY HUMANS? HULK TOLD YOU TO RUN!

THAT WAS THE *OTHER* WORK CREW! THEY FORGOT TO GIVE US THE MESSAGE! BUT *NOW* WE'VE GOT IT!

WORDS! EVEN WHEN PUNY HUMANS ARE SCARED OF HULK, ALL THEY CAN DO IS TALK, *TALK, TALK!*

BE AT EASE, FRIEND HULK! IN THE RELEASE OF WORDS DO MORTALS FIND THE MEANS TO ASSUAGE THEIR TERROR.

EVEN WERE THEY CAPABLE OF CAUSING YOU HARM, THEY MEAN YOU NONE.

WHERE, THEN, IS THE REASON FOR YOUR RAGE?

LONGHAIR IS LIKE ALL THE REST! HE WANTS TO KNOW WHY HULK DOES WHAT HE DOES! BUT HULK DOES NOT NEED TO HAVE REASONS...

BECAUSE HULK HAS POWER!

THUD

BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN--!

HULK REMEMBERS YOU, LONGHAIR! YOU ARE ANOTHER ONE WHO SAID YOU WERE HULK'S FRIEND-- AND THEN TRIED TO CAPTURE HULK!

FOR THINE OWN GOOD, HULK--AND FOR MANKIND'S!

BAH! HULK IS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHAT IS GOOD FOR HULK!

HULK NEARLY SMASHED YOU THE FIRST TIME WE FOUGHT...!

YOU ARE AS DELUDED AS YOU ARE POWERFUL, EMERALD ONE!

THE MIGHTY THOR WAS NEVER IN ANY DANGER OF BEING BESTED IN BATTLE! IF WE ***SEEMED*** EVENLY MATCHED, IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE I HAD REQUESTED A BOON FROM MY NOBLE FATHER, THE ALL-SEEING ODIN, LORD OF ASGARD--

--THAT I MIGHT FACE YOU FOR FIVE MINUTES WITHOUT MY URU HAMMER IN A TEST OF MUSCLE AGAINST MUSCLE--SINEW AGAINST SINEW!*

SKRAK!

GRAARGH!

*SEE THE NOW-CLASSIC **THOR** #112 --ARCHIVAL ALLEN.

OUR FIGHT THEN WAS INDECISIVE! YOU WERE ALLIED WITH THE SAVAGE SUB-MARINER, WHILST I FOUGHT ALONGSIDE MY FELLOW AVENGERS!

NEITHER OF US COULD CLAIM VICTORY...OR DEFEAT!

FOR MY PART, I DEEMED THE QUESTION OF STRENGTH UNIMPORTANT...

IT IS IMPORTANT TO HULK! LONG-HAIR HAS ALWAYS HATED HULK!

SHTOOM!

BUT HULK HAS ALWAYS ***HATED*** LONG-HAIR, TOO! AND WHAT HULK HATES --***HULK SMASHES!***

SATISFIED THAT HIS SAVAGE ASSAULT HAS FINISHED THOR, THE HULK LEAPS FROM THE SCENE OF BATTLE.

NOW NO ONE CAN STOP THE HULK!

HOWEVER, HAD THE HULK WAITED FOR THE DUST TO SETTLE, HE WOULD HAVE SEEN...

I FEAR I HAVE GIVEN THE HULK AN OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE, WHILE EXTRICATING MYSELF!

THE SITUATION MUST BE RECTIFIED! WITH THE HULK AT LARGE, THE CITY IS IMPERILLED!

MY COURSE IS CLEAR! THE MONSTER MUST BE BROUGHT TO HEEL!

SO SAYS THOR, GOD OF THUNDER!

THE TRAFFIC IN LOWER MANHATTAN SEEMS TO BE IN A PERPETUAL STATE OF "GRIDLOCK"!

THAT IS, STUCK IN INTERSECTIONS WITH NO TRAFFIC MOVING IN ANY DIRECTION!

NOT ONLY DOES THAT FOUL THE ALREADY MALODOROUS AIR--IT ALSO PLAYS HOB WITH HUMAN NERVES.

AWRIGHT! MOVE IT UP THERE! YA DEAF?! I SAID, GET THE LEAD OUT!

HONK HONK HONK

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU, MAN? DO YOU MAKE NOISE TO MAKE HULK MAD?!

HUH? I-- NO! THAT IS--! I MEAN--! *HELP!!*

HONNNK!

WHAT THE HECK'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, BUDDY? DON'T YOU KNOW THERE'S AN ANTI-NOISE LAW IN THIS...?

LAND OF LAGUARDIA-- THE HULK!!

'TIS AN ODD FEELING, THE MIGHTY THOR PATROLLING THE CITY LIKE SOME IMMORTAL POLICEMAN!

YET, 'TWAS MINE OWN CHOICE TO DWELL ON EARTH INSTEAD OF IN THE HALLOWED HALLS OF ASGARD! EH? THAT NEWS BULLETIN--!

FLASH!

THIS IS THE SHADOW TRAFFIC HELICOPTER REPORTING A BOTTLENECK IN THE WALL STREET AREA-- CAUSED BY WHAT APPEARS TO BE A GREEN-SKINNED MONSTER!

HEY! FLYIN' OVERHEAD! --IT AIN'T A BIRD-- IT AIN'T A PLANE--

WHAT THE HECK IS IT?

THE TRAFFIC REPORT WAS ACCURATE! THE HULK HAS REACHED LOWER MANHATTAN-- AND THE MAYHEM IS AS I EXPECTED!

RELEASE YON LAW OFFICER, HULK! YOUR QUARREL IS WITH ME-- NOT HIM!

BLUECOAT SHOT AT HULK! BUT IF LONGHAIR WANTS BLUECOAT--

--THEN LONGHAIR CAN *HAVE* HIM!

NO, PLEASE! I RETIRE IN TWO--

--WEEEEEEEKS!!

FEAR NOT, FRIEND. THE GOD OF THUNDER WILL ALLOW NO HARM TO BEFALL THEE!

SEEK SAFETY NOW-- AND LEAVE YON MONSTER TO ME!

MONSTER? LONGHAIR CALLS HULK MONSTER?!

AYE, HULK, FOR THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE AND EVER SHALL BE!

IN TIMES PAST I DID TRY TO EXCUSE YOUR SAVAGERY, KNOWING, AS I DID, THAT WITHIN THE MONSTER WAS ENTRAPPED A MAN!

BUT WHATE'ER TRACE OF HUMANITY SURVIVES BENEATH YOUR EMERALD SKIN LIES DEEPLY SUBMERGED -- WITH LITTLE CHANCE OF SURFACING E'ER AGAIN!

THE HEART OF THOR CRIES OUT AT THE PLIGHT OF YOUR ALTER-EGO, BRUCE BANNER--

--BUT THE *MIND* OF THOR KNOWS FULL WELL THAT BANNER HIMSELF WOULD NE'ER WISH TO SPARE THE HULK IF IT MEANT ENDANGERING HIS FELLOW MAN!

LONGHAIR WANTS TO KILL HULK FOR BANNER? HULK CAME TO CITY TO ESCAPE BANNER -- AND HULK *WILL* ESCAPE... IF HE HAS TO SMASH BANNER, CITY, *AND* LONGHAIR TO DO IT!

THE FURY OF THEIR CONFLICT CARRIES THE COMBATANTS DOWNTOWN, TO THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF MANHATTAN ISLAND. THERE, THEY PAUSE FOR A MOMENT BEFORE THE PORTALS OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS BROOKLYN BATTERY TUNNEL.

BROOKLYN BATTERY TUNNE

WHY HAS LONGHAIR STOPPED FIGHTING HULK? IS HE AFRAID?

I DO BUT MARVEL AT THE MAGNITUDE OF THY MISDIRECTED MIGHT, MONSTER! WOULD THAT THY POWER COULD BE TURNED TO GOOD!

HULK JUST CAME HERE TO GET AWAY, NOT TO FIGHT!

KA-RA-M!

HULK JUST WANTS TO BE LEFT ALONE! IF LONGHAIR AND BANNER WILL NOT LEAVE HULK ALONE, THEN HULK WILL TEAR THEM TO PIECES!

HOLY COW! IT'S TWO OF THEM SUPER-TYPES TURNIN' THE BROOKLYN BATTERY INTO A BATTLE-GROUND!

LEAVE YOUR CARS! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

BROOKLYN BATTE

BESTIAL BEHEMOTH! THE SIGHT OF THEE HATH CAUSED YON HAPLESS HUMANS TO ABANDON THEIR VEHICLES AND TAKE FLIGHT!

PUNY MEN WERE AS SCARED OF LONGHAIR AS THEY WERE OF HULK!

WHAT SAY THEE? ART THOU MAD?!

HAH! LONGHAIR WANTS PUNY HUMANS TO CALL HIM A HERO WHILE THEY CALL HULK A MONSTER!

BUT HULK HAS EYES, LONGHAIR-- HULK CAN SEE THAT THEY ARE AFRAID OF US BOTH!

FAWN'S FLORA POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK

FLOR

KRASH!

BY THE BLADE OF FANDRAL-- CAN THE BRUTE KNOW WHEREOF HE SPEAKS?

IN TRUTH, HE DOTH! IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, I DID NEGLECT TO SAFEGUARD THOSE WHOM I AM SWORN TO PROTECT!

MOMMY, HAVE THEY STOPPED FIGHTING? CAN WE GET OUT OF THE CAR NOW?

NO! STAY DOWN-- AND PRAY THEY DON'T SEE US!

'TIS WITH FEAR AND LOATHING THEY REGARD THOR-- YET ONLY *I* CAN SAVE THEM NOW!

DON'T TURN AWAY FROM HULK, LONGHAIR!

HULK, NO! THE CHILDREN--! *UNHHHH!*

THE HULK DOES NOT UNDERSTAND-- THERE IS NO TIME TO *MAKE* HIM UNDERSTAND!

OUR BATTLE HAS BREACHED THE TUNNEL'S CEILING SUPPORTS!

E'EN NOW THE WATER OF THE MIGHTY EAST RIVER, FLOWING O'ERHEAD, DRIPS DOWN, A MERE TRICKLE--

--THAT MAY WELL BECOME A RAGING TORRENT!

SETTING HIS MASSIVE SHOULDERS TO THE TUNNEL ROOF, THE MIGHTY THOR ATTEMPTS TO DEFY THE PRESSURES OF THE GREAT RIVER ABOVE.

MEANWHILE, THE INCREDIBLE HULK ALLOWS **HIS** ATTENTION TO DRIFT FROM HIS OPPONENT AS HIS EMERALD EYES CATCH SIGHT OF...

LONGHAIR'S HAMMER!

ONCE, WHEN HULK TRIED, HE COULD NOT LIFT IT.'

GNAARR! WHY? HULK IS STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!

BUT HULK CAN'T LIFT HAMMER, AND LONGHAIR CAN! THAT MEANS THOR IS STRONGER THAN HULK!

NO! IT CAN NOT BE! HULK WILL NOT LET IT BE!

HULK *WILL* LIFT HAMMER AND USE HAMMER TO *SMASH* THOR!

HULK WILL-- *HUNH?!?*

HULK *DID* IT! HULK LIFTED--

--PUNY STICK?!

AND LONGHAIR HAS TURNED INTO A *PUNY HUMAN?!?*

IN--IN MY DESPERATE HASTE TO SHORE UP THE SAGGING TUNNEL, I ALLOWED SIXTY SECONDS TO ELAPSE WITHOUT GRASPING MY ENCHANTED URU HAMMER, MJOLNIR!

NOW IT HAS REVERTED TO A SIMPLE CANE-- WHILE THOR HAS ONCE AGAIN BECOME THE LAME DOCTOR DON BLAKE!

WHO ARE YOU, MAN? WHERE IS LONGHAIR?

ALL IS LOST! UNLESS I REGAIN MY WALKING STICK, BECOME THOR AGAIN, THE TUNNEL WILL COLLAPSE BENEATH THE PRESSURE FROM THE EAST RIVER!

ANSWER HULK, MAN! WHERE IS *THOR?*

I'VE GOT TO CONVINCE THE HULK OF THE DANGER OF THE SITUATION WE'RE IN!

HULK, LISTEN TO ME! I *AM* THOR! H-HE LIVES *INSIDE* ME JUST LIKE YOU LIVE INSIDE BRUCE BANNER!

WHAT IS PUNY MAN TALKING ABOUT?

HULK IS HULK--NOT BANNER! BANNER HATES HULK--WANTS TO BE AS STRONG AS HULK--IS ALWAYS TRYING TO TAKE HULK OVER OR SEND HULK AWAY!

BUT ITS ALWAYS HULK WHO BEATS BANNER IN THE END!

THE HULK REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE--TO ACCEPT--THAT HIS IS A *SHARED* EXISTENCE WITH BRUCE BANNER! THERE'S NO WAY I CAN REACH THAT PART OF HIS MIND POSSESSED BY HIS ALTER-EGO!

THOR MUST *HATE* PUNY MAN LIKE HULK HATES BANNER! HULK COULD SMASH YOU, BUT THAT WOULD ONLY MAKE THOR HAPPY! HULK HATES THOR!

HULK WILL FIX THOR BY LETTING YOU LIVE...WITH THOR TRAPPED INSIDE YOU FOREVER!

H-HE'S GOING--TOSSING MY WALKING STICK ASIDE!

HE'S GIVEN ME THE MEANS TO SHED MY MORTAL LIMITATIONS ONCE AGAIN--

--AND TO BECOME THE MIGHTY *THOR!* WITH MY MIGHTY URU MALLET IN MY HAND, I MUST NEEDS ACT, WHILST THERE STILL BE TIME!

THOR LEAPS TO THE TOP OF THE ABANDONED TRUCK, HIS MAGICAL TRANSFORMATION HAVING GONE UNWITNESSED BY THOSE STILL TRAPPED WITHIN THE TUNNEL.

KIDS, LOOK! THOR'S BACK! HE MUST HAVE DRIVEN AWAY THE HULK AND RETURNED TO SAVE US!

THERE DOTH BE MORE TO THIS TALE THAN THOU CANST KNOW, MADAM--BUT THY EXPLANATION 'TIS ENOUGH--'TWILL SUFFICE!

NOW GET THEE AND THY CHILDREN FROM THY VEHICLE, AND SUMMON A REPAIR CREW TO THIS TUNNEL! NOT E'EN THE BROAD BACK OF THOR CAN SUPPORT THE WEIGHT OF A RAGING RIVER FOREVER!

SHORTLY THEREAFTER...

THAT DAME WITH THE TWO KIDS WAS RIGHT-- IT *IS* THOR, HOLDING UP THE TUNNEL ROOF SINGLEHANDED!

CALL IN THE PUMP TRUCKS AND HYDRAULIC JACKS AND LET'S GIVE HIM A BREAK!

AGONIZING HOURS LATER...

I'M TOLD BY MOTORISTS THAT THE HULK CAUSED THIS NEAR-DISASTER, THOR.

'TWAS OUR BATTLE THAT DID ENDANGER THE TUNNEL--A BATTLE THAT COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED HAD I BUT UNDERSTOOD AT THE ONSET THAT THE HULK WISHED ONLY TO GET AWAY.

GET AWAY? WHERE TO?

TO ANSWER THAT, FRIEND, THOU WOULDST HAVE TO BE AS ALL-SEEING AS MY REGAL FATHER, ODIN.

ACROSS THE EAST RIVER FROM THE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN LIES THE BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN.

IN ITS HEYDAY, IT WAS A FLOURISHING PORT.

SHIPS STILL COME-- NOT SO MANY, OR SO OFTEN-- BUT WHAT CARGO THERE IS TO BE LOADED IS LIFTED ON BOARD HERE, BOUND FOR PORTS-OF-CALL ALL OVER THE WORLD.

ONE SUCH PORT IS TEL AVIV--

--IN THE NATION KNOWN AS ISRAEL.

(IS THAT THE LAST OF THE CARGO, MEN?)

(AYE, SKIPPER! THE HOLDS ARE FULL!)

(THEN BATTEN THE HATCHES AND LET'S SAIL FOR HOME!)*

*ALL DIALOGUE TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW, OF COURSE-- AL.

UNBEKNOWNST TO THE SKIPPER OR SAILORS OF THE ISRAELI FREIGHTER KNOWN AS THE STAR OF DAVID, THEY ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL ITEM OF CARGO DEFINITELY NOT ON THE SHIP'S MANIFEST.

BIG BOAT IS GETTING READY TO LEAVE-- BUT NOT WITHOUT HULK!

BOAT WILL TAKE HULK FAR AWAY FROM EVERYTHING HULK HATES! FROM THE CITIES! FROM THE PUNY HUMANS ALWAYS CALLING HULK MONSTER! FROM THE FIGHTING--

--AND FROM *BANNER!*

NEXT ISSUE: The PROMISED LAND!

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

MARVEL® TREASURY EDITION™

SPIDER-MAN® Vs. The HULK!™

#25

at the WINTER OLYMPICS

MILGROM & ABEL

ALL NEW! ALL EXCITING!

Stan Lee presents:

THE MARVEL TREASURY EDITION OF THE

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN and THE INCREDIBLE HULK

AT THE 1980 WINTER OLYMPICS

BILL MANTLO
Script

BILL MANTLO
MARK GRUENWALD
STEVEN GRANT
Story

HERB TRIMPE
Pencils

BRUCE PATTERSON
Inks

JIM NOVAK
Letters

GEORGE ROUSSOS
Colors

BILL SIENKIEWICZ
BRUCE PATTERSON
Covers

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FROZEN SNOW.....page 12

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SUBTERRANEA.....page 22

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THE CONTEST
OF CHAMPIONS.....page 46

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Every four years since 1896 the nations of the world have met to participate in the most remarkable forum for furthering individual skill through competition man has ever known! This event is the *Olympic Games!* But rarely has the contest been so deadly as this year when, unbeknownst to competing humanity, two sinister subterranean forces have decided to use the *1980 Winter Olympics* as a battleground to settle their own destructive disputes, drawing into the fray not only the olympic athletes, but two super-powerful champions known as...

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN AND THE INCREDIBLE HULK

WELCOME TO LAKE PLACID, NEW YORK, HOME OF THE 1980 WINTER OLYMPICS! IT IS ON THESE SNOWY SLOPES THAT ATHLETES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD WILL GATHER, ON THE MORROW, TO COMPETE IN A BREATHTAKING CONTEST OF SPEED AND AGILITY!

AND IT IS HERE, TONIGHT, THAT OUR TALE BEGINS...

DIGGER! OUR CAPTIVE IS SOUNDING AN ALARM!

<HELP! I AM BEING KIDNAPPED--BY MONSTERS! WON'T SOMEBODY HELP ME?!>*

DIGGER, CAN'T YOU KEEP THE WOMAN QUIET??

NOT IF YOU WISH ME TO CARRY HER AT THE SAME TIME, BOULDER!

LANDSLIDE! DIGGER! BOULDER! HURRY!

TOO LATE FOR THAT, LADY! YOU JUST CAN'T UP AND SNEAK OFF WITH AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE LIKE MARIA KARSOV WITHOUT AROUSING THE ATTENTION OF THIS WIDE-EYED WEB-SLINGER!

WE MUST AWAY WITH OUR CAPTIVE BEFORE WE ARE SEEN!

*ALL LANGUAGES FREELY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE. -- MARK.

CHAPTER ONE: THE OUTCASTS!

SPELLBINDING STORY BY BILL MANTLO / MARK GRUENWALD / STEVEN GRANT | BILL MANTLO WRITER | HERB TRIMPE ARTIST | BRUCE PATTERSON INKER | JIM NOVAK, LETTERS G.ROUSSOS, COLORS

IT'S A GOOD THING PETER PARKER COULDN'T GET TO SLEEP IN HIS ROOM AT THE PRESS DORM, OTHERWISE I WOULD NEVER HAVE HEARD THE MUTED SOUNDS OF A STRUGGLE OUTSIDE MY WINDOW!

DIGGER, WE ARE OBSERVED!

YES, AND OUR ATTACKER, DO YOU RECOGNIZE HIM?

SPIDER-MAN!!

DIGGER, THE WOMAN IS SLIPPING FROM YOUR GRASP!

SLOPPY, KIDDIES -- DROPPING YOUR PRIZE AFTER SNEAKING PAST A ZILLION OLYMPIC SECURITY GUARDS TO SNATCH HER!

YET ONLY YOU HAVE SEEN US, SPIDER-MAN!

WHICH MEANS, IN ORDER TO RECAPTURE THE RUSSIAN FIGURE-SKATING CHAMPION, WE NEED OVERCOME ONLY YOU!

AND FOR THAT, THE POWER OF LANDSLIDE WILL BE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT!

TOUCHING THE SNOW-COVERED GROUND WITH HIS SLENDER GLOVED FINGERS--

--THE IMPOSSIBLY THIN FIGURE SENDS SHOCKWAVES SKITTERING ACROSS THE SURFACE...

...SHOCKWAVES THAT QUICKLY ERUPT INTO A CASCADING...

SNOWSLIDE! COMING RIGHT AT ME!

RRRUMBLLLE

THAT GUY'S NO ORDINARY TERRORIST OUT TO KIDNAP AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE TO TO GAIN PROPOGANDA POINTS!

ALL HE DID WAS TOUCH THE GROUND WITH HIS SKINNY FINGERS TO SEND A MOUNTAIN OF SNOW RUSHING DOWN AT ME!

IT WOULD BURY AN ORDINARY MAN STANDING IN ITS WAY!

BUT, IF THERE'S ONE THING THIS LIL' OL' WALL-CRAWLER ISN'T-- IT'S ORDINARY!

WRUMPH!

SORRY YOUR LITTLE AVALANCHE MISSED ME, FELLA! BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME!

BRAGGART! THERE WILL BE NO "NEXT TIME"!

NOT ONCE THE DIAMOND-HARD CLAWS OF DIGGER TEAR YOUR PERCH OUT FROM BENEATH YOU!

HOLY SMOKES! HE SLASHED RIGHT THROUGH THE STRUCTURAL SUPPORTS OF THE PLATFORM BEARING THE OLYMPIC BOBSLEDS!

I'M OFF BALANCE!

I'M FALLING!

KRAASHH!

RIGHT INTO THE WAITING ARMS OF THE POWERHOUSE POSITIONING HIMSELF TO CATCH ME!

YOU JUMP PRETTILY, LITTLE MAN!

BUT YOU WILL NOT JUMP FROM THE BONE-CRUSHING BEAR HUG OF... BOULDER!

MAYBE NOT, MUSCLES!

BUT LET'S SEE HOW LONG YOU CAN HOLD ME WHEN A SPIDER-POWERED JUDO TOSS SENDS YOU FLYING THROUGH THE AIR!

N-NO!

WHY NOT? DEFEAT NOT IN YOUR CONTRACT?

DIGGER, LOOK OUT! I CAN-NOT STOP MYSELF--!

UNNGGHH!!

YOU HAVE ELUDED LANDSLIDE, MADE A MOCKERY OUT OF BOULDER AND DIGGER!

BUT YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE..., WATER-WITCH!

A WOMAN -- WITH THE VOICE OF A WITHERED OLD CRONE -- POINTING SOME KIND OF DEVICE AT ME!

NO! AT THE GROUND IN FRONT OF ME, CAUSING A GEYSER TO ERUPT!

AGED I MAY BE, SPIDER-MAN --

--YET STILL CAN I COMMAND THE DOWSING ROD GIVEN ME BY THE MASTER TO DRAW WATER FROM THE EARTH, ENCASING YOU IN A BLOCK OF SOLID ICE!

SOMEHOW, SHE MADE THE WATER FREEZE INSTANTA-NEOUSLY!

I'M TRAPPED!

AND NOW MY EERIE OPPONENTS ARE REGROUPING -- ADVANCING AGAIN ON MARIA KARSOV WHO'S BEEN COWERING ALL THIS TIME, TOO FRIGHTENED TO FLEE!

I'VE GOTTA HELP HER! BUT HOW, WHEN I CAN'T EVEN HELP MYSELF?

SEIZE THE WOMAN--

--BEFORE THE SOUND OF OUR BATTLE REACHES OTHER EARS!

TOO LATE...

THAT'S RIGHT! SOME KIND OF COMMOTION IN THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE! NO, I DON'T KNOW WHAT! TOO DARK TO SEE!

SECURITY 903

SECURITY STATION N.O.5

GET A SECURITY SQUAD OUT RIGHT AWAY!

AND...

SPREAD OUT -- AND CUT IN THE FLOOD-LIGHTS! HURRY!

WHILE, AT THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE...

COME, MARIA KARSOV... IT IS FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION!

SHE IS FRIGHTENED, FELLOW OUTCASTS! SHE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ENGLISH-- DOES NOT SEE THAT WE ARE HERE TO HELP HER!

SOMEHOW WE MUST COMMUNICATE TO HER THAT WE MEAN HER NO HARM!

YET, WHILE IT IS SAID THAT A FACE CAN COMMUNICATE FAR MORE THAN WORDS, THE ONLY THING CONVEYED BY DIGGER'S REVEALED VISAGE IS... TERROR!

EEEEEEEEEE!!

MY MASK--!

GOOD LORD!

THOSE KID-NAPPERS AREN'T TERRORISTS! I DON'T EVEN THINK THEY'RE HUMAN!

THEY'RE REACHING FOR KARSOV AGAIN!

AND THE ONLY WAY I'M GONNA HELP HER IS IF I'M--

FREE!

WATER-WITCH LEFT JUST ENOUGH AIR-SPACE INSIDE THE ICE-BLOCK TO FLEX MY MUSCLES--

--SHATTERING MY ICE PRISON IN TIME TO STOP YOU CREEPOS FROM CAPTURING KARSOV AGAIN!

CURSE YOU, WEB-SLINGER!

YOUR ILL-INFORMED INTERFERENCE HAS JEOPARDIZED THE SAFETY OF MARIA KARSOV! EVEN NOW THAT WHICH WE SOUGHT TO PREVENT OCCURS!

HUH??

TURNING, THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN SEES...

MARIA KARSOV TRAPPED IN SOME KIND OF GIANT, GLOWING GEM!

IT'S SINKING BELOW THE SURFACE, TAKING THE SOVIET UNION'S FIGURE SKATING STAR WITH IT!

SO WHAT AM I STANDING AROUND FOR?? I'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING TO HELP HER!

THWIP!

FIRING HIS WONDROUS WEB-SHOOTERS--

--THE SPIDER-POWERED YOUTH STRAINS EVERY MUSCLE TO THE UTMOST, TRYING TO PULL THE DESCENDING DIAMOND BACK UP OUT OF THE EARTH!

GOTTA HOLD IT!

CAN'T LET GO--!

THOP!

UNNH! SURFACE OF THE DIAMOND'S TOO SLICK! MY WEBBING SLIPPED OFF!

THE GEM'S SUNK ALMOST COMPLETELY BELOW THE SURFACE! I CAN'T EVEN GET A FINGERHOLD ON IT!

THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO STOP IT! NOTHING!

AND WHEN THE GLITTERING GEMSTONE HAS VANISHED FROM SIGHT...

THE WOMAN IS GONE!

SHE HAS TAKEN HER!

WHAT WILL WE TELL THE MASTER?

TELL? WE WILL BRING HIM SPIDER-MAN --TO PROVE OUR STORY!

BUT BEFORE THE MISSHAPEN OUTCASTS CAN ADVANCE UPON OUR BEWILDERED WALL-CRAWLER...

AIIEEE! LIGHTS!

ARRGH!

MY EYES! MY EYES!

I CAN-NOT SEE!

HUH? THE LIGHTS ARE BRIGHT, DAZZLING EVEN ME--

--BUT THE OUTCASTS SOUND AS IF THEY'RE IN PAIN! THEY'RE BEATING A HASTY RETREAT, FORGETTING ALL ABOUT YOURS TRULY!

I DON'T GET IT!

BUT THERE IS NO TIME TO PONDER THE MYSTERY POSED BY THE OUTCASTS, FOR AT THAT MOMENT...

SPIDER-MAN!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING HERE, BUT I WANT HIM HELD FOR QUESTIONING!

SORRY, BOYS! I HATE SURPRISE QUIZZES!

THWIP

BUT JUST GIVE ME A CHANCE TO GO HOME AND BRUSH UP ON MY NOTES--

HE'S GETTING AWAY!

--AND I'LL BE BACK BRIGHT AND EARLY, PENCIL AND PAPER IN HAND!

LATER...

IT FIGURES!

I RESPOND TO A SCREAM FOR HELP!

--AND SWING SMACK INTO THE MIDDLE OF ANOTHER SITUATION I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MAYBE EVEN CAUSING THE VERY KIDNAPPING I'D HOPED TO PREVENT!

ALL RIGHT, SPIDER-MAN BLEW IT! MAYBE PETER PARKER CAN PICK UP THE PIECES!

MEANWHILE, ON THE SNOWY SLOPES OF OLYMPIC VILLAGE...

WE'VE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE! MARIA KARSOV'S MISSING!

SHE'S THE THIRD OLYMPIC ATHLETE TO BE KIDNAPPED! THE PRESS IS BOUND TO FIND OUT NOW!

YOU BET WE ARE!

I'M MARTY MILLER, SPORTS EDITOR OF THE DAILY GLOBE! YOU CAN'T KEEP THIS OUT OF THE PAPERS! THE PUBLIC HAS A RIGHT TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE'S WATCHING!

PARKER! I'VE BEEN LOOKING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU! DID YOU GET ANY PHOTOS OF THE KIDNAPPING?

SORRY, MR. MILLER--

--BUT I WAS IN THE PRESS DORM, ASLEEP!

THE BIGGEST EVENT IN OLYMPICS' HISTORY AND YOU WERE SLEEPING?!?

ALL RIGHT, SO WAS I! DON'T SWEAT IT, KID!

SAY, ISN'T THAT BRAD ROSSI, THE OLYMPIC SKIER? WE WENT TO MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL TOGETHER!

YEAH? THINK HE'LL GRANT YOU AN INTERVIEW?

I'M A PHOTOGRAPHER, MR. MILLER! NOT A REPORTER!

SO WHADDA YA THINK WE PAY REWRITE MEN FOR? GWAN!

WORKING FOR THE GLOBE'S GETTING TO BE A PAIN! IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE MONEY...

THAT'S RIGHT, MARIA KARSOV'S WAS THE THIRD KIDNAPPING!

"THE FIRST WAS **CLAUDE LEBRON**, FRENCH BOBSLEDDER!

"THEN **BOBBY KYLE**, CANADIAN HOCKEY CHAMP!

"AND THEN MARIA KARSOV GOT IT!"

ARE YOU AFRAID, AS THE UNITED STATES' TOP SKIING CONTENDER, THAT YOU MIGHT BE NEXT?

AFRAID?

I'VE WAITED ALL MY LIFE TO COMPETE IN THE OLYMPICS!

GOOD FOR YOU, BRAD! AND SPIDER-MAN'S GOING TO STICK AROUND TO SEE YOU GET YOUR CHANCE!

THE NEXT MORNING DAWNS COLD AND CRISP...

AND, WITH THE RISING SUN, COMES AN EMERALD BEHEMOTH OVER THE SNOW-CAPPED HILLS!

A MONSTER MORTAL MEN HAVE WISELY LEARNED TO AVOID!

BUT THEN THE **LAVA MEN** ARE NEITHER MORTAL NOR WISE, ELSE THEY WOULD NOT SEEK TO ANGER... THE *INCREDIBLE* **HULK!**

THE MISTRESS HAS ENTRAPPED ANOTHER IN HER DIAMOND OF DOOM!

BUT THIS ONE IS DIFFERENT! HE IS NO MERE HUMAN!

HE IS THE HULK! OUR ENEMY!

DRAG FORTH THE LAVA CATAPULT.

ARRGH! ALWAYS DO PUNY BEINGS TRY TO HARM HULK! TO CAGE HIM! BUT HULK WILL BE FREE! HULK WILL SMASH!

CHAPTER TWO: FIRE ON FROZEN SNOW!

WITH A BONE-WRENCHING JOLT, THE GARGANTUAN JEWEL PLUM-METS TO EARTH, EMBEDDING ITSELF IN THE SNOW...

WHAT IS WRONG? WHY CAN'T HULK BREAK FREE?

STUPID DIAMOND CAN'T BE STRONGER THAN HULK!

BUT IT IS, MONSTER! THE MISTRESS DESIGNED THE GEMSTONES AS INESCAPABLE PRISONS! THEY WILL OPEN ONLY FOR HER!

AND YOU WILL ONLY BE FREE IF SUCH IS HER WILL!

FIRE-MEN MAKE FUN OF HULK! BUT FIRE-MEN ARE WRONG!

NOTHING THAT IS MADE CAN HOLD HULK--

--IF HULK DOES NOT WANT TO BE HELD!

AND NOW HULK WANTS TO BE FREE!

FREE!

KATHROOM

HE HAS SHATTERED THE DIAMOND OF DOOM! SUCH A THING HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE!

STILL, IT IS THE *MISTRESS'* WILL THAT HE BE BROUGHT BEFORE HER! WE MUST OBEY!

AND OBEY WE SHALL!

STAND YOUR GROUND, LAVA-MEN! PRIME YOUR CARBONIZERS AND PREPARE TO FACE THE FOE!

FIRE-MEN ARE CALLED LAVA MEN?

AND THEY POINT GUNS AT THE HULK??

GUNS MEAN LAVA MEN ARE AFRAID OF HULK-- BUT HULK IS NOT AFRAID OF GUNS! SHOOT! AND, WHEN YOU ARE DONE, HULK WILL SMASH!

THE HULK IS ADVANCING!

REMEMBER! THE *MISTRESS* WANTS HIM ALIVE!

FIRE!

POOM PWOOM POOM

GRARRR!

OUR WEAPONS HAVE "CINDERIZED" THE AIR AROUND THE HULK, BINDING HIM IN BANDS OF VOLCANIC ASH!

BUT THE BANDS DO NOT HOLD! EVEN NOW THE HULK BREAKS FREE!

KRAKK!

HULK SAID HE WAS NOT AFRAID OF YOUR GUNS!

BECAUSE HULK KNOWS THERE IS NO GUN MADE THAT CAN HURT HIM!

BUT HULK KNOWS HOW TO HURT LAVA MEN! HULK HAS SEEN THAT FIRE-MEN ARE MADE OUT OF BURNING ROCK!

AND HULK KNOWS THAT SNOW CAN PUT OUT FIRE!!

BROTHERS, LOOK OUT--!

TOO LATE! THE MONSTER IS--!

HSSSSS

BACK, BROTHERS! BACK BEFORE THE MONSTER EXTINGUISHES THE VERY HEAT THAT GIVES US LIFE!

BUT WHAT OF THE *MISTRESS'* COMMANDS?!

LET THOSE FRESH TO THE BATTLE CARRY THEM OUT!

FEAR NOT, FIRE BROTHERS! WE WILL NOT FAIL YOU! NOT EVEN THE MIGHTY HULK CAN WITHSTAND OUR FLAME-GUNS!

FIRE? BAH! FIRE CAN ONLY HURT HULK IF IT HITS HIM!

AND HULK WILL NOT STAY TO BE HIT!

NOT WHEN HULK CAN LEAP ABOVE FIRE--

FROOSH

FROOSH

FROOSH

--AND LAND BEHIND FIRE AND FIRE-MEN!

THE MONSTER'S OUTFLANKED US! RUN!

YES, RUN FROM HULK, LAVA MEN! RUN LIKE ALL THE PUNY HUMANS WHO HAVE TRIED TO TRAP HULK!

HULK HAS SMASHED PUNY HUMANS--

--AND HULK WILL SMASH YOU!!!

HE IS TOO STRONG! WE CANNOT FACE HIS POWER!

BUT, THE MISTRESS--?!

SHE IS NOT HERE! IT IS OUR LIVES THAT ARE IN DANGER!

BUT, IN FLEEING THE HULK'S FURY, THE LAVA MEN QUICKLY REALIZE THAT THEIR FLIGHT IS CARRYING THEM DOWN THE STEEPLY INCLINED SLOPE--

...CAN CERTAINLY BE APPRECIATED BY THE GRINNING GOLIATH ON THE MOUNTAINSIDE ABOVE!

YAAGHH!!

--WITH A RESULT THAT, IF NOT PLANNED BY THE HULK...

KAWHOOM

ROLL, FIRE-MEN! ROLL AWAY FROM HULK! HULK LIKES THIS GAME-- BOWLING LAVA MEN INTO TREES!

SO YOU FIND OUR TRAVAIL AMUSING, DO YOU, MONSTER? LET'S SEE IF YOU LAUGH AT THIS!

LAUNCH THE LAVA CATAPULT!

CAT-A-PULT?

WHAT IS CAT-A-PULT?

FWOOSH

SHHH

LAVA MEN SHOOT FIREBALL AT HULK??

BUT FIREBALL HAS MISSED-- AND ALL PUNY LAVA MEN HAVE DONE IS MAKE HULK MAD!

BY ALL THAT'S HOLY --RELOAD THE CATAPULT!

CATAPULT LOADED!

THEN LAUNCH THE NEXT FIREBALL, BROTHER! NOW!

NO! HULK WILL NOT STAND AND WAIT FOR LAVA MEN TO TRY AND HIT HULK AGAIN!

SPRAK!

HULK WILL TAKE LAVA MEN'S WEAPON AWAY FROM THEM!

HE'S SEIZED THE CATA-PULT!

RUN! RUN!

KA-THROOM

AND HULK WILL MAKE SURE LAVA MEN NEVER USE IT TO TRY TO HURT HULK AGAIN!

WHAT'S WRONG, LAVA MEN? HAVE YOU NO MORE WEAPONS TO SHOOT AT THE HULK? IS THAT WHY YOU RUN?

BUT HULK TOLD YOU THAT YOU HAD MADE HULK MAD! NOW HULK WILL SMASH YOU--

--EVEN IF HULK HAS TO FOLLOW YOU INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN TO DO IT!

COME BACK, LAVA MEN! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE HULK!

AH, BUT PERHAPS THE SMALLER, FLEETER LAVA MEN CAN ELUDE THEIR LUMBERING PURSUER...

FOR SOON, IN THE IMPENETRABLE SUBTERRANEAN DARKNESS WITHIN THE VERY HEART OF THE MOUNTAIN--

--THE HULK REALIZES HE IS... ALONE!

LAVA MEN ARE GONE!

BUT THEY WILL COME BACK! THEY CANNOT ESCAPE HULK! HULK WILL JUST SIT HERE AND WAIT FOR THEM!

AND SIT IS JUST WHAT THE JADE GIANT DOES... AS SECONDS TURN TO MINUTES AND MINUTES TURN TO HOURS. THE STEADY DRIP OF WATER FROM STALACTITES IS THE ONLY SOUND HE HEARS UNTIL...

HULK?

YOU ARE ANGRY, AREN'T YOU, HULK? YOU STILL BURN FOR A FOE TO SMASH!

EH? WHO SPEAKS TO HULK?

ONE WHO NEEDS YOU, O GREAT HULK! ONE WHO KNOWS THE PRIME MOVER HAS SENT YOUR GREAT STRENGTH TO AID ME AGAINST MY ENEMIES!

IT IS A WOMAN WHO SPEAKS TO HULK! A... BEAUTIFUL WOMAN!

BEAUTIFUL? YES, I HAVE BEEN CALLED THAT, HULK! BUT I AM STILL A WOMAN -- FRAGILE, HELPLESS-- AFRAID THAT WITHOUT THE STRENGTH OF YOUR MIGHTY MUSCLES, I AM LOST!

WHO ARE YOU, WOMAN? WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM HULK?

WANT? WHY, I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU, HULK! I WANT YOU TO HELP ME DEFEAT MY ENEMIES!

I WANT YOU TO USE YOUR POWER TO MAKE ME *QUEEN KALA, MONARCH* OF ALL *SUBTERRANEA!*

SO THAT YOU MAY REIGN BESIDE ME... AS MY *KING!*

CHAPTER THREE:
SLAUGHTER IN SUBTERRANEA!

THE NEXT MORNING...

--EXHIBITING PERFECT FORM AS HE PICKS UP SPEED, CONTENDER NUMBER 5-- BRAD ROSSI, OF THE UNITED STATES--IS THE FIRST TO LAUNCH HIMSELF INTO SPACE TO OPEN THE 1980 OLYMPICS' SKI JUMP COMPETITION!

LOOK AT HIM GO! HE'S GONNA BE HARD TO BEAT!

YES, IT'S SPORTS, THE SENSE OF COMPETITION, THAT'S UNITED MANKIND TODAY TO WATCH THESE GREAT ATHLETES...

THERE GOES COSELL AGAIN!

THERE GOES YOUR BOYFRIEND, HEATHER--AND HE LOOKS LIKE A WINNER!

BRAD'S DREAMED OF THAT OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL ALL HIS LIFE!

ISN'T THIS SOMETHING, LINDA?

IT'S WONDERFUL, HERB!

HIGH ABOVE--

--OBLIVIOUS TO THE CHATTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSEMBLY BELOW--

--BRAD ROSSI SOARS THROUGH SPACE!

ALOFT, WITH ARMS EXTENDED! SKIS SLICING THE SKY! GLIDING EFFORTLESSLY, LIKE AN EAGLE ON THE WIND!

DOING THAT WHICH MAN HAS ALWAYS DREAMED OF--DEFYING GRAVITY!

HANGING ABOVE A WORLD OF VIRGIN WHITENESS FOR WHAT MAY SEEM AN ETERNITY!

THEN, LIKE A VOYAGER TOO LONG AWAY FROM HOME--

--HE CHOOSES TO RETURN, TO ACCEPT THE PULL OF THE EARTH ONCE AGAIN BENEATH HIS SKIS AS HE STREAKS DOWNWARD...

SHSSSS

THE ADULATION OF THE MASSES GREETS HIS EARS.

HURRAH!

BIEN! TRES BIEN!

BRAD DID IT! HE SET A NEW RECORD!

THE OLYMPIC SECURITY SQUADS ARE RACING TO SURROUND ROSSI! THERE'S NO IMMEDIATE DANGER, HOWEVER, OR MY SPIDER-SENSE WOULD HAVE GONE OFF LIKE A CIVIL DEFENSE ALERT!

BUT I CAN UNDERSTAND THEIR CONCERN--THERE'S BEEN NO WORD ABOUT THE KIDNAPPED ATHLETES YET, NO DEMAND FOR RANSOM!

PARKER, YOU'RE THE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHER ROSSI WILL ALLOW CLOSE! STICK WITH HIM, KID!

YOU KNOW, IN CASE...!

THE GLOBE WOULD LIKE THAT "IN CASE", WOULDN'T IT, MARTY? HEADLINES ABOUT BRAD'S KIDNAPPING WOULD REALLY SELL NEWSPAPERS!

"BUT, BELIEVE ME, WILD HORSES COULDN'T DRAG ME FROM BRAD ROSSI'S SIDE FOR THE DURATION OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES!"

IT WAS A GOOD JUMP, WASN'T IT HONEY?

OH, BRAD--IT WAS MAGNIFICENT!

I'LL SECOND THAT, HOTSHOT! YOU'VE PROBABLY COPPED YOURSELF THE GOLD MEDAL!

THANKS, PETE, BUT IT'S BAD LUCK TO THINK ABOUT WINNING BEFORE YOU'VE WON -- BESIDES, RITTERLING OF GERMANY JUMPS NEXT AND HE'S GOOD!

OF COURSE HE IS, DARLING!

"ONE DOESN'T GET TO COMPETE IN THE OLYMPICS, IN ANY CATEGORY...

...UNLESS ONE IS THE BEST THERE IS!

HEATHER'S GOT A LOT OF FAITH IN ME, PETE!

SO IT SEEMS!

AND IT'S THAT FAITH, AND THE DESIRE TO WIN FOR MY COUNTRY, THAT'S BROUGHT ME THIS FAR! EH?

THE CROWD'S CHEERING!

RITTERLING'S MAKING HIS JUMP!

WHAT FORM!

HE'S BEAUTIFUL! AS GOOD AS BRAD!

A-AND IT LOOKS AS IF HE MAY HAVE BEATEN BRAD'S DISTANCE!

IN THE SKI JUMP COMPETITION, THE DISTANCES ARE: BRAD ROSSI OF THE UNITED STATES, 170 METERS! KLAUS RITTERLING OF GERMANY, 170 METERS!

A TIE! WE BOTH BROKE THE WORLD'S SKI JUMP RECORD AND ENDED IN A TIE! RITTERLING AND I WILL HAVE TO JUMP AGAIN!

I'M PRAYING FOR YOU, BRAD! WITH ALL MY HEART!

HE'LL NEED IT, HEATHER! HOW MANY TIMES IN ONE DAY CAN A GUY BREAK A WORLD'S RECORD??

THEN AGAIN, IF ANYBODY CAN PULL IT OFF, YOUR BOYFRIEND CAN! I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH DETERMINATION, SUCH A WILL TO WIN!

IF BRAD LOSES, IT'LL BREAK HIS HEART, PETE!

I DON'T WANT TO SEE THAT HAPPEN!

AGAIN BRAD ROSSI STANDS READY!

AGAIN, HE SLANTS DOWN THE SNOW-COVERED SLOPE!

AGAIN HE ARCS OUT INTO SILVER SPACE!

BUT THIS TIME HIS LEAP IS ARRESTED--

--AS A GLEAMING, GLITTERING GEM-STONE FORMS IN THE AIR AROUND HIM!

WHAT IN BLAZES--??

THAT GEM--IT'S THE SAME AS THE ONE THAT CARRIED OFF MARIA KARSOV!

STOP STARING, PARKER! GET THAT SHOT!

YOU WANT THE PHOTOGRAPH SO BADLY, YOU TAKE IT, MR. MILLER!

I'M GOING TO TRY TO HELP, BRAD ROSSI!

HUH? WHAT CAN YOU--?? WAIT A MINUTE!

HOW DO I WORK THIS THING??

I'VE BEEN STOPPED IN MIDAIR! THE DIAMOND'S DESCENDING!

WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME HAS GOT HOLD OF HIM??

WE'LL FIND OUT AFTER WE GET HIM OUT OF IT!

IF WE CAN!

THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO!

THE DIAMOND'S SINKING BENEATH THE SNOW!

TAKING ROSSI WITH IT!

BUT TAKING HIM WHERE??

TO WHEREVER MARIA KARSOV AND THE OTHER MISSING OLYMPIC ATHLETES HAVE BEEN SPIRITED!

BUT THIS TIME THERE'S GONNA BE A SPIDER-MAN ON THAT DIABOLICAL DEMON'S TRAIL--

--AS SOON AS I STASH MY PETER PARKER DUDS IN THIS CHIMNEY FLUE!

NOW THERE'S NOTHING THAT CAN STOP ME FROM SAVING BRAD!

NOTHING?!?

WHOM!

BOULDER! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT YOU AND YOUR PLAYMATES WOULD SHOW UP!

AGAIN YOU BLAME THE OUTCASTS FOR SOMETHING WE SOUGHT TO PREVENT, SPIDER-MAN!

TELL IT TO THE JUDGE, MUSCLES!

NO! WE KNOW THAT WE WILL NEVER BE BELIEVED IN YOUR COURTS! WE HAVE SAMPLED SURFACE JUSTICE BEFORE!

SURFACE JUSTICE?? UH-OH! WATER-WITCH IS CUTTING LOOSE WITH HER DOWSING ROD AGAIN!

DRAWING FORTH THE WATER FROM THAT PRESSURE TANK ABOVE ME!

AND TRYING TO FREEZE ME INSIDE A FROZEN STRAITJACKET AGAIN!

BUT YOU BROKE FREE FROM WATER-WITCH'S ICE-PRISON EARLIER, SPIDER-MAN! THIS TIME OUR COMBINED POWER WILL INSURE YOU DO NOT RESIST US!

LANDSLIDE! CAUSING THE ROOF TO ERUPT!

UNBALANCING YOU AND HURLING YOU INTO MY ARMS, WALL-CRAWLER, WHERE YOU SHALL BE HELD--

--UNABLE TO EVADE BOULDER'S FLAILING FISTS!!

UNNGH!

PAIN... OBLIVION... DARKNESS...

THEN RECOVERY... AWAKENING...

...TO THE KIND OF NIGHTMARE ONE HOPES TO LEAVE BEHIND IN DREAMS!

THE WEB-SLINGER IS COMING TO!

SEE HIM SHRINK AWAY, APPALLED BY OUR UNMASKED FEATURES!

SUCH IS EVER THE REACTION OF OUR SURFACE BROTHERS, DIGGER-- THOSE WE LEFT BEHIND WHEN WE CHOSE TO DWELL HERE IN SUBTERRANEA!

SUBTERRANEA? BUT THAT'S THE KINGDOM OF--

THE MOLE MAN!

WELCOME TO MY HALLOWED HALLS, MY ONCE AND FUTURE FOE! I HOPE YOUR JOURNEY BELOW THE SURFACE HAS LEFT YOU RESTED--

--FOR YOU WILL NEED YOUR STRENGTH TO AID ME IN MY WAR AGAINST KALA, QUEEN OF THE UNDERWORLD!

HELP YOU, MY EYE! I'M AN UNWILLING GUEST, GOGGLE-EYES... BROUGHT HERE BY YOUR OUTCASTS!

--PROBABLY THE SAME WAY YOU KIDNAPPED THOSE FOUR OLYMPIC ATHLETES!

I? YOU WRONG ME, MY FRIEND! IT IS KALA WHO KIDNAPPED YOUR ATHLETES, TO FORCE THEM TO AID HER IN HER WAR TO GAIN THE FABLED FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH!

A POOL THAT EXISTS HERE, IN MY REALM!

YEARS AGO, THE AGELESS KALA VISITED YOUR SURFACE WORLD AND BEGAN TO AGE RAPIDLY.

TO HER HORROR, SHE DISCOVERED THE AGING CONTINUED ONCE SHE RETURNED TO SUBTERRANEA! SHE NEEDED THE IMMORTALITY-GIVING WATERS OF TYRANNUS TO HALT THE PROCESS!

BUT TYRANNUS HAD VANISHED, AND HIS FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH FELL TO THE MOLE MAN! I WILL NEVER GRANT KALA ACCESS TO IT, FOR SHE RIDICULED ME AND SPURNED MY OFFER OF LOVE.*

*FANTASTIC FOUR #127.--M.

BANISHED FROM HER OWN PEOPLE, KALA MADE HERSELF QUEEN OF THE LAVA MEN, AND DECLARED WAR UPON ME! MY FORCES CONSISTED OF MY MINDLESS SUBTERRANEANS--

--AND MY OUTCASTS, SURFACE HUMANS WHO CHOSE TO DWELL IN MY KINGDOM BECAUSE THEY WERE UNWANTED ON THE SURFACE!*

*ACQUIRED IN FF ANNUAL #13. --MARK.

NOW KALA HOPES TO SET HER OWN SURFACE CHAMPIONS--THE CAPTURED OLYMPIC ATHLETES--AGAINST MY OUTCASTS! I HAD HOPED TO STOP HER--

EH? ONE OF MY SUBTERRANEANS SIGNALLING ME?

OUR DEFENSES ARE BREACHED! KALA IS INVADING SUBTERRANEA!

OUTCASTS! SUBTERRANEANS! TO ARMS! THE FOE IS UPON US! DEFEND THE REALM!

AND YOU, SPIDER-MAN, WILL BE MY FIFTH CHAMPION!

THE ONE ALLY KALA CANNOT POSSIBLY BE EXPECTING!

NOT ME, MOLEY! FIGHT YOUR OWN BATTLES!

I JUST WANT TO FIND THE MISSING ATHLETES AND GET THEM AND ME THE HECK OUT OF HERE! UNNH!

FOOL! THEY SERVE KALA--AS YOU WILL SERVE ME!

YOU'RE CRACKED! NOTHING CAN MAKE ME HELP YOU, OR MAKE THE OLYMPIC ATHLETES HELP KALA!

IN THAT YOU ARE WRONG, SPIDER-MAN!

STRAM

UNGGH!

KALA HAS THE MEANS TO FORCE THOSE ATHLETES TO DO HER BIDDING--

--JUST AS I HAVE THE MEANS TO FORCE YOU TO FIGHT FOR ME! GAZE ON THE EARTH-MOVER, WALL-CRAWLER! ABANDON ME NOW...

...AND I'LL USE IT TO DESTROY THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE WHICH RESTS ON THE SURFACE ABOVE!

YOU WIN, MOLE MAN! I'LL FIGHT YOUR SILLY WAR!

UNTIL I CAN FIGURE A WAY OUT OF THIS MESS!

AS THE WEB-SLINGER PONDERS HIS DILEMMA, THE MASSED FORCES OF QUEEN KALA AND THE MACABRE MOLE MAN MEET IN SAVAGE SUBSURFACE COMBAT! STALACTITE PROJECTILES SCREAM ACROSS THE STEEP CHASMS! FLAMING MOLTEN LAVA LEAPS FROM CRASHING CATAPULTS!

HURLING THEMSELVES INTO A BREACH IN SUBTERRANEA'S DEFENSES, THE HUMAN OUTCASTS STAND, REPELLING THE INVADERS BEFORE THEY CAN SCRAMBLE ACROSS A NARROW STONE BRIDGE INTO THE HEART OF THE MOLE MAN'S TERRITORY!

STAND WITH ME, OUTCASTS! WE MUST DRIVE THE INVADERS FROM OUR ADOPTED HOME!

BUT THEY ARE MANY, BOULDER --AND CUNNING!

WHILE OUR ARMY CONSISTS OF THE MOLE MAN'S MINDLESS MINIONS! THEY CANNOT ADAPT TO THE LAVA MEN'S SHIFTING STRATEGIES!

STILL, THE MOLE MAN HAS ACCEPTED US WHO WERE CAST OUT BY THE SURFACE WORLD ABOVE!

WE MUST FIGHT FOR HIM WHO HAS GIVEN US RESPECT... EVEN IF WE FALL IN HIS DEFENSE!

FORWARD! THE OUTCASTS CANNOT REPEL US ALL!

ARRGH!

BUT THE UNCANNY OUTCASTS FIGHT WITH A FURY BORN OF LOVE FOR THE WORLD IN WHICH THEY HAVE FOUND REFUGE!

ON THE SURFACE THEY WERE MISFITS--UGLY, MISSHAPEN, LAUGHED AT AND LOATHED!

HERE THEY ARE CHAMPIONS, HONORED BY FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE!

ARRGH! WATER-WITCH DOUSES OUR LIFE-GIVING FIRES!

BUT THE FIERY ONSLAUGHT OF THE LAVA MEN TAKES ITS TOLL OF THE MINDLESS SUBTERRANEANS...

...TOO DIM-WITTED, EVEN, TO KNOW THEY ARE DYING IN DROVES!

THE OUTCASTS CANNOT LONG FIGHT ALONE!

BLAST IT, THE LAVA MEN ARE DECIMATING OUR RANKS! I'M SO WEARY EVEN MY MIGHTY SINEWS ACHE FROM THE FIGHTING!

RUN TO THE MOLE MAN! TELL HIM WE MUST HAVE HELP, OR ALL WILL SOON BE LOST!

THE SUBTERRANEAN RACES OFF!

WHILE, IN THE CAVERNS OF THE LAVA MEN, A GRIM COMMAND IS GIVEN!

TELL KALA THE ENEMY HOLDS HIS GROUND! THE TIME TO SEND FORTH HER CHAMPIONS IS NOW!

AND ANOTHER MESSENGER RACES THROUGH UNLIT UNDER-EARTH CORRIDORS...

UNERRINGLY RETRACING THE TWISTING TRAIL HIS LAVA ARMY TOOK TO THE FRONT...

UNTIL, AT LAST, HE REACHES HIS DESTINATION...

MY QUEEN--?

WELL, MESSENGER? IS IT NEWS THAT THE BATTLE IS WON THAT YOU BRING TO YOUR MISTRESS, KALA, QUEEN OF THE UNDERWORLD??

THE OUTCASTS HAVE HALTED OUR ADVANCE! WE MUST HAVE REINFORCEMENTS IF WE ARE TO WIN FOR YOU THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH!

GARB THE MONSTER FOR BATTLE! IT IS TIME FOR THE HULK TO FIGHT FOR KALA!

BAH! HULK DOES NOT WANT TO FIGHT NOW! HULK WANTS TO EAT!

THE HULK IS NOT YET FULLY UNDER MY SWAY, ALTHOUGH THE DRUGS IN HIS FOOD WILL SOON MAKE HIM OBEDIENT TO MY EVERY COMMAND!

DOLT! YOU HAVE INTERRUPTED YOUR KING AT HIS SUPPER! RETURN TO THE FRONT! THE HULK WILL COME WHEN HE IS READY!

BUT, MY QUEEN--??

GO!

YOU SEE, HULK, HOW I ATTEND TO YOUR NEEDS? BUT YOU WILL FIGHT FOR KALA, WON'T YOU?

MAYBE. WHEN HULK IS DONE EATING.

OF COURSE. AND YOU MUST BE THIRSTY, TOO!

THE BRUTE HAS CONSUMED ENOUGH MIND-CONTROL DRUGS IN HIS FOOD AND DRINK TO HAVE RENDERED A HUNDRED MEN OBEDIENT TO OUR QUEEN BY NOW!

COME! WE MUST PUT ON HIS BATTLE ARMOR WHILE HE SUPS!

DRINK, MY KING! DRINK YOUR FILL!

SLURP

PTWAH

WHY DO FIRE-MEN WHISPER BEHIND HULK'S BACK?

HULK CANNOT EAT WHILE FIRE-MEN SNEAK, SO HULK WILL REST! MAYBE AFTER HE HAS SLEPT HULK WILL FEEL LIKE FIGHTING!

MAYBE.

THE REVOLTING GREEN GARGOYLE! HOW IT GALLS ME TO HAVE TO ALLY MYSELF WITH ONE SUCH AS HIM! STILL, ONCE THE DRUGS TAKE EFFECT, HE WILL SERVE ME WELL!

WHAT OF THE HUMAN ATHLETES, MY QUEEN?

AH, YES! MY FOUR CAPTIVE CHAMPIONS!

THEY WILL FIGHT IN THE HULK'S STEAD!

LIKE BEANS WE WILL, LADY! WE'VE HEARD ENOUGH ABOUT YOUR LOUSY WAR TO KNOW THAT WE DON'T WANT ANY PART OF IT!

OH, BUT YOU WILL PLAY YOUR PART, BRAD ROSSI --AS YOU LEAD YOUR THREE FELLOW ATHLETES AGAINST THE MOLE MAN'S OUTCASTS!

THOUGH YOU MAY HAVE THE POWER TO TRANSLATE OUR WORDS TO A COMMON TONGUE THAT WE MAY SPEAK TO EACH OTHER--

--THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN MAKE US FIGHT IF WE DON'T WANT TO!

NO? I COULD DRUG YOU, AS I'VE DRUGGED THE MIGHTY HULK... BUT I WANT YOUR MINDS TO BE FREE!

THUS I'VE INSURED THAT YOU WILL DO MY BIDDING--

--BY SECURING, BRAD ROSSI, THE WOMAN YOU LOVE AS MY HOSTAGE!

BRAD!

HEATHER! OH, LORD! THEN KALA'S DIAMOND DOOM HAS MADE YOU A PRISONER, TOO!

I-I WAS TAKEN RIGHT AFTER YOU DISAPPEARED! OH, DARLING--

--DON'T FIGHT FOR HER! SHE'S EVIL! IF SHE GAINS IMMORTALITY--

--THERE'S NO TELLING HOW POWERFUL SHE'LL BECOME, ABLE TO PRACTICE HER EVIL FOR CENTURIES UNTOLD!

PRECISELY, SURFACE WOMAN!

ZAP

BUT IF YOUR LOVER AND HIS FELLOW ATHLETES DO NOT SECURE FOR ME ACCESS TO THE FABLED FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, ALLOWING ME TO LIVE FOREVER, MY AGING RAY WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOU DO NOT LIVE BEYOND TOMORROW!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME? I'M OLD! *OLD!*

HEATHER! CURSE YOU, KALA! IT'S NOT HER YOU WANT--BUT US! RESTORE HER... AND I SWEAR WE'LL FIGHT FOR YOU!

OUI, MES AMI! THOUGH YOU HAVE NOT ASKED, YOU SPEAK FOR ALL OF US!

THANKS, CLAUDE.

VERY WELL, THEN! YOU SAY YOU WILL SERVE AS MY CHAMPIONS!

THUS, I FREE YOU FROM YOUR DIAMOND DUNGEONS!

HEATHER!

OH, HONEY! I'M SORRY YOU GOT DRAGGED INTO THIS! BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW!

NOT QUITE, SURFACE MAN! YOU SEE, THE ONLY THING THAT CAN REVERSE MY AGING RAY ARE THE WATERS OF THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH!

NOW WE BOTH HAVE A REASON FOR WANTING IT! STEP FORWARD, MY CHAMPIONS, AND ARM YOURSELVES!

FOR YOU, BRAD ROSSI, THERE ARE ***ROCKET SKIS*** AND ***POWER POLES***, CAPABLE OF INCINERATING AN ENEMY!

CUTE.

FOR MARIA KARSOV, THERE ARE SLASHING, RAZOR-SHARP ***SUPER-SKATES!***

"DOSVE-DANYA"!

FOR CLAUDE LEBRON, THERE IS THE ***BOMB-SLED***, ARMED WITH FIERY FLAME-CANNONS!

"MERCI, MADAME!"

AND, FOR BOBBY LYLE...

LET ME GUESS --A ***SUPER-STICK*** THAT FIRES ***POWER PUCKS!***

YES! THE MOST ADVANCED WEAPONS KNOWN TO SUBTERRANEAN SCIENCE--

--ADAPTED TO YOUR PARTICULAR SPORT, THAT YOU MAY WIN FOR ME IMMORTALITY! AN UNENDING LIFE OF BEAUTY AND POWER!

YOU LEAVE US NO CHOICE, KALA! WE'LL FIGHT YOUR INSANE WAR!

WE WILL CONFRONT YOUR ENEMIES AND WIN FOR YOU THE PRIZE OF ETERNAL YOUTH!

BUT YOU ONLY HOLD OUR LOYALTY AS LONG AS YOU HOLD HEATHER HOSTAGE!

AND SHOULD SHE SOMEHOW BE RESTORED, WE'LL TURN THIS POWER YOU'VE GIVEN US BACK AGAINST YOU!

I HAVE NO FEAR OF THAT, LYLE! THE GIRL SHALL REMAIN BY MY SIDE! WE SHALL BOTH DRINK THE WATERS OF THE FABLED FOUNTAIN TOGETHER--OR NOT AT ALL!

MISTRESS, THE MONITOR SCREEN!

EH? WHO DARES INTERRUPT--?

IT IS I, THE MOLE MAN, WHO DARES, KALA! MY FORCES HAVE CAPTURED YOUR COMMUNICATIONS STATION! THUS I THOUGHT IT TIME TO MAKE YOU A PROPOSAL!

I'LL NOT TREAT WITH YOU, YOU UGLY LITTLE SLUG!

BE REALISTIC, FAIR QUEEN! THIS WAR DECIMATES *BOTH* OUR KINGDOMS! WHY FIGHT WHEN THERE IS A BETTER WAY TO SETTLE OUR DIFFERENCES?

WHAT... *BETTER* WAY??

LET US CALL A HALT TO THIS WAR AND AGREE TO A *CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS*! MY OUTCASTS AGAINST THE ATHLETES YOU KIDNAPPED!

THE CONTEST SHALL BE HELD ON THE SURFACE, WHERE NO FURTHER DESTRUCTION CAN THREATEN OUR REALMS!

AN *UNDERWORLD OLYMPICS*? WHERE NEITHER YOUR SUBTERRANEANS NOR MY LAVA MEN CAN COME TO ANY HARM?

I AGREE, MOLE MAN!

THEN, I SHALL READY MY *EARTH-LIFTER!* WE SHALL SOON MEET, KALA... ON THE SURFACE!

BUT, AS THE MOLE MAN'S VISAGE FADES FROM THE MONITOR SCREEN...

YES, MEET WE SHALL, TO DECIDE THIS CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS!

BUT I WILL HAVE A *FIFTH* COMPETITOR TO STAND BESIDE MY HUMAN ATHLETES!

ONE THE MOLE MAN CANNOT *POSSIBLY* HAVE PREPARED FOR! AN INVINCIBLE WARRIOR TOTALLY ANSWERABLE TO MY WILL!

HULK... WILL... *SMASH!*

THAT, MY GREAT GREEN GOLIATH, IS MY MOST FERVENT DESIRE! YOU SHALL GO AT THE FORE OF MY ATHLETES, DRIVING THEM TO VICTORY AGAINST THE MOLE MAN AND HIS PITIFUL OUTCASTS--

--EVEN AS THAT AGED CRONE WILL INSURE AGAINST ANY THOUGHT YOUR TEAMMATES MIGHT HARBOR OF BETRAYAL!

WITH THE HULK ON HIS TEAM, BRAD'S SURE TO WIN THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH FOR KALA!

SURE, IT'LL RESTORE MY YOUTH BUT IT WILL ALSO BESTOW IMMORTALITY ON ONE OF THE MOST RUTHLESS WOMEN ALIVE!

MEANWHILE, ON THE SURFACE, SPORTS EDITOR MARTY MILLER SEARCHES IN VAIN FOR HIS ERRANT PHOTOGRAPHER...

PARKER! WHERE IN BLUE BLAZES HAS THAT KID GOTTEN OFF TO? HISTORY IS BEING MADE RIGHT IN FRONT OF MY EYES--

--AND I CAN'T WORK HIS BLAMED CAMERA!!

THE ENTIRE OLYMPIC COMMUNITY IS DAZED AND BAFFLED BY THE DISAPPEARANCE OF BRAD ROSSI, KIDNAPPED WHEN A GIANT JEWEL MATERIALIZED AROUND HIM IN MID-JUMP!

EVERY INVESTIGATIVE AGENCY IN THE WORLD IS DESCENDING ON LAKE PLACID! AND THE QUESTION IS: WHERE HAVE OUR ATHLETES GONE?

THE ANSWER TO THAT SPORTCASTER'S QUERY COMES IN THE FORM OF A GROUND-SWELLING UPHEAVAL, AS TREMORS AND AFTERSHOCKS LASH THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE...

EARTHQUAKE!!

B-BUT THERE'S NEVER BEEN ONE IN THIS AREA BEFORE!!

ARRRRR

RRRUMMMBLLLE!!!

MANKIND HAS BEEN PREY TO NATURAL DISASTERS BEFORE!

VOLCANOES HAVE ERUPTED, DESTROYING GREAT CITIES! EARTHQUAKES HAVE TOPPLED MONUMENTS BUILT TO LAST ETERNITY! FLOODS AND TIDAL WAVES HAVE BORNE OFF WHOLE POPULATIONS!

YET THIS DISASTER IS ALL THE MORE CATACLYSMIC FOR THE FACT THAT IT IS UNNATURAL--CAUSED NOT BY CREEPING GEOLOGIC PLATES--BUT BY ENORMOUS MAN-MADE PYLONS THAT THRUST FORTH FROM THE EARTH, BEARING THE ENTIRE OLYMPIC VILLAGE TOWARD THE CLOUDS!

MIRACULOUSLY, NO ONE IS KILLED!

IT IS WITH GREAT CONSTERNATION THAT THE TINY RURAL COMMUNITY OF LAKE PLACID LOOKS UP TO FIND THAT THEIR DUTY AS HOST HAS BEEN SUPERCEDED...

...AND THAT THE 1980 WINTER OLYMPICS HAS SOMEHOW BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM!

THEN THE EARTH STOPS HEAVING. THE THUNDERCLAP RUMBLING ROLLS AWAY INTO THE SKY.

ALL IS STILL, WAITING...

FOR THE FLASH OF BRILLIANCE THAT HERALDS THE ARRIVAL OF TWO GRIM GAMEMASTERS AND, THE HUMANS ASSEMBLED HOPE, AN EXPLANATION!

LOOK! TWO FIGURES APPEARING IN THAT BEAM OF LIGHT!

NOW WE'LL FIND OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO!

THIS MUST BE TIED IN TO THE MISSING ATHLETES!

THE HUMANS COWER IN THE FACE OF OUR SUBTERRANEAN SCIENCE, MOLE MAN!

STILL, IT IS NEVER WISE TO UNDERESTIMATE THEM, WHICH IS WHY I HAVE PLACED A FORCE FIELD AROUND THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE!

WE MAY CARRY OUT OUR CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS FREE FROM FEAR OF ASSAULT!

NOW ABANDON YOUR PLACES IN THE JUDGE'S STAND, SURFACE-DWELLERS! THERE IS A LADY TO BE SEATED!

DO AS HE SAYS!

DO WE HAVE ANY CHOICE?!

YOUR "THRONE" AWAITS, QUEEN KALA! PRAY, SIT, THAT YOU MAY COMMAND A BETTER VIEW OF THE UPCOMING CONTEST!

YOUR TONGUE POSSESSES A GIFT OF FLATTERY THAT BELIES YOUR GROTESQUE APPEARANCE, MOLE MAN!

THEY'VE HIJACKED THE OLYMPICS, YET THEY ACT LIKE VISITING ROYALTY!

AH, THAT'S BETTER! EVER SINCE YOU REJECTED MY OFFER OF MARRIAGE, KALA, I HAVE DREAMED OF BEING SEATED BY YOUR SIDE!

AND I HAVE DREAMED ONLY OF WRESTING FROM YOU THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH THAT YOU CLAIMED AFTER TYRANNUS VANISHED FROM THE UNDER-WORLD!

YES, THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH! A PRECIOUS POSSESSION, ONE THAT WOULD ALLOW YOU TO TAUNT ME WITH YOUR PROUD BEAUTY FOR ALL ETERNITY!

YOU COULD HAVE HAD IT AT ANY TIME, QUEEN KALA, IF ONLY YOU'D CONSENTED TO BE MY BRIDE!

WED MYSELF TO A MISBEGOTTEN TOAD LIKE YOU?? RATHER WOULD I DIE FIRST OF OLD AGE!

A FATE THAT MAY WELL BEFALL YOU IF YOUR LIFE-PRESERVING HELMET WERE TO BREAK HERE ON THE SURFACE WORLD!

I DO NOT INTEND TO TARRY, MOLE MAN, FOR THIS "CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS" WILL SOON BE OVER...

--ONCE YOUR OUTCASTS FIND THEMSELVES OVERMATCHED BY THE COMBINED MIGHT OF MY KIDNAPPED HUMAN CHAMPIONS, THE ***ATHLETES***, AND THE AWESOME POWER OF... THE INCREDIBLE ***HULK!***

WITCH! VIXEN! THE TEAMS WERE TO BE EQUAL! YOU'VE CHEATED! CHEATED!

BUT I'VE KNOWN, SINCE THE DAY YOU BETRAYED ME TO SIDE WITH TYRANNUS, THAT YOU COULD NOT BE TRUSTED!

DO YOU HEAR ME, KALA? I ANTICIPATED YOUR DUPLICITY--

--AND PREPARED FOR IT BY SECURING A FIFTH CHAMPION OF MY OWN!

SUBTERRANEANS, SEND FORTH--

SPIDER-MAN!

THERE ARE THE MISSING ATHLETES, SAFE AND SOUND!

BUT WHAT DOES THE MOLE MAN EXPECT ME TO DO AGAINST THE HULK?!!

KEEP THE TELE-VISION CAMERAS ROLLING!

WE'RE ABOUT TO WITNESS THE FIGHT OF THE CENTURY!

CONNIVING, UNDER-HANDED, LITTLE MOLE! YOU PLANNED TO CHEAT ALL ALONG!

NO, ONLY AFTER I DISCOVERED THAT YOU WERE RECRUITING SURFACE ATHLETES TO AID YOU IN OUR WAR DID I SEND MY OUTCASTS TO THWART YOU!

FAILING IN THAT, I DECIDED I NEEDED INSURANCE AGAINST YOUR TREACHERY!

IT APPEARS I WAS CORRECT!

BUG MAN? HULK... KNOWS... BUG MAN! BUT... CAN'T REMEMBER... FROM WHERE.

THE HULK SEEMS DAZED -- OR DRUGGED! OF COURSE! THAT'S THE ONLY WAY KALA COULD GET HIM TO FIGHT FOR HER!

BUT IT'S A CINCH THAT DRUGS DIDN'T WEAKEN HIM! THE HULK'S FOUGHT ME BEFORE, AND NEARLY SQUASHED ME!

UNLESS I CAN FIGURE SOMETHING OUT FAST, THEY'RE GONNA BE BURYING A SPIDER-MAN AT THE 1980 OLYMPICS!

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS!

ALL SENSE OF SPORT IS DISPELLED AS FIERCE BATTLE CRIES RING OUT ACROSS THE SHIFTING SNOWS AND ICY SURFACE OF THE OLYMPIC LAKE!

NO UNDERWEIGHT BEANPOLE'S GONNA STAND IN MY WAY, LANDSLIDE!

RACE, SKIER! RACE TO YOUR DOOM!

KALA'S LAVA MEN AND THE MOLE MAN'S SUBTERRANEANS ARE HOLDING BACK THE SPECTATORS, MAKING SURE NO ONE INTERFERES WITH THE CONTEST!

STOP... DANCING... BUG-MAN! STAND STILL... SO HULK ...CAN SMASH!

BUT I'D BETTER KEEP MY MIND ON THE HULK IF I WANT TO GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE!

I NEED ONLY HEAVE THIS STONE INTO YOUR NET TO WIN, GOALIE!

OUR TEAMS ENGAGE IN BATTLE, MOLE MAN! VICTORY-- AND THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH-- SHALL BE MINE!

THE CONTEST HAS JUST BEGUN, KALA! THE PRIZE IS YET TO BE WON!

YOU COMPETE ON DANGEROUSLY THIN ICE, SKATER!

YET, STILL WILL I CLAIM VICTORY IN OUR MATCH, WATER-WITCH!

AND IT'S MY JOB TO STOP YOU FROM DOING JUST THAT, BOULDER!

TURN BACK, BOMBSLED! YOU WILL NEVER COMPLETE YOUR DOWNHILL RUN-- NOT WHILE DIGGER STANDS IN YOUR WAY!

I WILL WIN OUR CONTEST, DIGGER-- EVEN IF I MUST BYPASS YOUR SMOLDERING CORPSE TO DO IT!

AND SO THE DEADLY DUEL BEGINS-- **OUTCAST** AGAINST **ATHLETE**... **SPIDER-MAN** VERSUS **THE HULK** --IN A BATTLE THAT WILL CERTAINLY EFFECT THE FATE OF THE NETHERWORLD... AND PERHAPS EVEN THE SURFACE WORLD AS WELL!

BAH! IT GOES TOO SLOW! I FEEL MYSELF AGING, DESPITE MY ATMOSPHERE HELMET! THE PACE OF THE CONTEST MUST BE QUICKENED!

STRIKE HULK! STRIKE TO KILL!

EH? DEATH IS NOT REQUIRED TO CLAIM A VICTORY--ONLY DEFEAT!

BUT THE DRUG-MUDDLED HULK KNOWS NOTHING OF THE RULES OF COMBAT! HE KNOWS ONLY THAT HE IS TO OBEY KALA'S EVERY COMMAND...

...AND KALA HAS COMMANDED HIM TO SLAY!

BUG-MAN... MUST... DIE!

WHOA! CLOSE!

IF THE HULK HAD CONNECTED, HE'D HAVE KNOCKED MY HEAD INTO THE NEXT STATE!

SORRY GREEN-SKIN! I NAMED MYSELF BENEFICIARY ON MY LIFE INSURANCE POLICY--

--AND I'VE GOT TO SURVIVE IN ORDER TO COLLECT!

HOW 'BOUT A GAME OF HOP-FROG, MUSH-MIND? YOU STAND STILL--

--AND I HOP OUT OF REACH!

BUG-MAN... MAKES FUN... OF HULK! BUG-MAN... IS FASTER... THAN HULK!

IT IS... STUPID ARMOR... THAT SLOWS ...HULK DOWN!

HULK WILL... GET RID... OF STUPID ARMOR!

THEN HULK... WILL BE...AS FAST... AS BUG-MAN! HULK WILL... CATCH BUG-MAN!

O BOY! HERE HE COMES, LIKE A LOCOMOTIVE WITH A GOOD HEAD OF STEAM!

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN AVOID HIS RUSH ON THIS SLIPPERY ICE! UNGH! CAUGHT IN HIS VISE-LIKE GRIP!

HULK DOES... NOT HEAR... BUG-MAN... MAKING FUN ...OF HULK... NOW!

THAT'S CAUSE IT'S HARD TO LAUGH WHEN YOUR RIBS ARE BEING CRUSHED! GOTTA MAKE HIM LET ME GO!

OH, HULK-- PLEASE DON'T THROW ME TOWARD-- THE SKI-LIFT PYLONS! YOU'LL-- KILL ME IF YOU DO!

THROWING BUG-MAN ...WILL KILL BUG-MAN? HULK... MUST KILL BUG-MAN! SO... THAT IS WHAT ...HULK WILL DO!

WHADDA YA KNOW? THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK --BUT IT WORKED!

THE HULK'S STUPIDITY HAS GIVEN ME THE BREATHER I NEEDED TO GET BACK INTO THE FIGHT!

AND THIS TIME I'M GOING IN SWINGING!

ALL RIGHT, YOU BIG MOUNTAIN OF MUSCLE! THIS ISN'T ANY SPIDER-POWERED SLOUCH YOU'RE FACING, YOU HEAR ME?

I'VE ROCKED AND SOCKED THE BIGGEST AND THE BEST OF 'EM! AND NOW, WHAT WITH THE MOMEN-TUM GIVEN ME BY MY SWING AROUND THE PYLON--

-- NOT EVEN YOU CAN...

SLIPPING ON THE ICE? RIGHT TOWARD THE HULK??

SOMEBODY... STOP ME!!

BUT EVEN AS THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN SLIDES TOWARD IMMINENT DISASTER, BOULDER HEAVES HIS SECOND STONE AT THE GOALIE!

I DEFLECTED BOULDER'S FIRST TOSS WITH MY SUPER-STICK, BUT HE JUST KEEPS THEM COMING!

SUDDENLY, THE GOALIE IS GIVEN AN UNASKED-FOR RESPITE BY A SINISTER ACTION TAKING PLACE ON THE SIDELINES!

THE ATHLETE FALTERS, FIRE-BROTHERS! LAUNCH THE *FLAME-HOOPS*-- NOW!

ARRGH! RINGS OF FIRE MELTING THE VERY ICE UPON WHICH I STAND-- CAUSING ME TO MISAIM MY MISSILES!

KALA AND HER LAVA MEN SEEK TO INFLUENCE THE CONTEST'S OUTCOME!

AND, IN THE JUDGE'S STAND...

CHEAP, CHEATING WITCH! YOUR LAVA MEN--

--ARE ONLY DOING WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR SUBTERRANEAN SERVANTS TO DO, IF THEY ONLY HAD THE BRAINS!

I INTEND TO WIN THIS CONTEST, MOLE MAN! AND, BY HOOK OR BY CROOK, I SHALL!

I HAD AT LEAST HOPED TO WIN THIS CONTEST FAIRLY! BUT I CAN'T BACK OUT OF THIS FIGHT OR KALA WILL DOOM HEATHER RYAN TO OLD AGE FOREVER!

YET, MAYBE I CAN SALVAGE MY HONOR BY GIVING MY OPPONENT A SPORTING CHANCE!

IF YOU DEFLECT *THIS* MISSILE, GOALIE, IT WILL NOT BE BECAUSE OF ANY SKILL YOU HAVE DISPLAYED, BUT BECAUSE YOUR MISTRESS HAS RESORTED TO STEALTH!

WRONG, BOULDER! I WILL DEFLECT YOUR TOSS SKILLFULLY--

SWAK!

-- BUT I WILL ALSO DEMONSTRATE TO YOU THAT I HAD NO PART IN KALA'S CHEATING --

-- BY SENDING THE DEFLECTED STONE SKITTERING INTO THE LAVA MAN'S FLAME LAUNCHER!

LOOK OUT, FIRE-BROTHERS! OUR OWN CHAMPION IS DEMOLISHING OUR--!

FWOOM

EVEN AS BOULDER PREPARES TO HURL ANOTHER STONE, HE LOOKS ACROSS THE ICE AT GOALIE WITH THE RESPECT AND ADMIRATION OF ONE COMPETITOR FOR ANOTHER!

WHILE, ELSEWHERE ON THE FROZEN LAKE...

TO WIN I NEED ONLY TOUCH YOU, SKATER!

A TASK THAT WILL BE MADE EASIER WHEN YOU ARE HEMMED IN BY WATERSPOUTS!

I MUST SKATE AS NEVER BEFORE, CALLING UPON MY EVERY RESERVE OF SPEED AND SKILL! I DARE NOT LOSE--

--OR BRAD'S LOVER WILL NEVER HAVE HER YOUTH RESTORED!

BUT ONCE AGAIN IT IS NOT SPEED OR ABILITY THAT MATTER AS THE LAVA MEN LAUNCH YET ANOTHER FLAME-ATTACK INTENDED TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THE CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS!

THE WATER-WITCH IS IN POSITION! FIRE THE *ICE-MELTER!*

FWROOSH

AIIEEE! THE ICE MELTS BENEATH ME! I PLUNGE INTO THE FROZEN WATERS! I AM HELPLESS! HELPLESS!

IN HER FRIGHT, THE WATER-WITCH HAS FORGOTTEN THAT HER OWN DOWSING ROD COULD FORM A GEYSER, LIFTING HER TO SAFETY! I COULD EASILY TOUCH HER NOW AND CLAIM THE VICTORY--

-- BUT THE STATE THAT NURTURED MY SPORTING SKILLS NEVER TAUGHT ME TO PROFIT THROUGH ANOTHER'S MISFORTUNE! I MUST WIN OVER WATER-WITCH --

-- BUT IT SHALL NOT BE THROUGH CHEATING!!

CURSE THE WOMAN! HER SUPER-SKATES HAVE SLASHED THROUGH THE HOSE THAT PUMPS FLAME TO THE ICE-MELTER!

WATER-WITCH CONJURES FORTH A GEYSER TO LIFT HER BACK TO THE ICE, AND FACES WITH RENEWED RESPECT HER RUSSIAN OPPONENT!

WHILE, ON THE SNOW-COVERED SLOPES...

IN ORDER TO WIN OUR CONTEST, YOU MUST PASS ME AND REACH THE BOTTOM OF THE SLOPE, SKIER!

AND THAT MY EARTH-MOVING ABILITIES, GIVEN ME BY THE MOLE MAN, SHALL INSURE YOU NEVER DO!

EH?! A MOUNTAIN OF SNOW RISING ALMOST MAGICALLY IN MY PATH--!!

IMPRESSIVE, LANDSLIDE!

BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO KEEP ME FROM WINNING THIS CONTEST FOR HEATHER!!

AND WHAT OF THE AGED HEATHER RYAN? AT THIS MOMENT, WE FIND HER FAR BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH, ESCORTED UNDER GUARD BY A COMPANY OF KALA'S LAVA MEN...

BRAD AND THE OTHERS ARE FIGHTING -- AIDING THE DICTATRESS KALA -- TO SAVE ME!

FIRE BROTHERS, ALERT! THE SURFACE WOMAN ESCAPES!

I-I CAN'T LET THEM CONTINUE TO USE THEIR SKILLS TO SERVE EVIL!

I MUST SOMEHOW PUT A STOP TO THIS CONTEST!

AFTER HER! KALA WILL HAVE OUR HEADS IF WE DO NOT RECAPTURE HER HOSTAGE!

TH-THEY'RE PASSING ME BY! APPARENTLY THEY CAN'T SEE ANY BETTER DOWN HERE THAN I CAN!

BUT IT WON'T TAKE THEM LONG TO PICK UP MY TRAIL! I'VE GOT TO ELUDE THEM! I MUST KEEP GOING... TOWARD THE SURFACE!

THERE, FIRE BROTHERS! THE WOMAN FLEES!

FOLLOW HER!

DO NOT LET HER ESCAPE!

CLIMBING UP ONTO THAT LEDGE SHIELDED ME FROM THEIR SIGHT! NOW TO CLIMB DOWN, AND...

OH, I-I'VE LOST MY FOOTING! I'M FALLING!!

HEATHER RYAN MIGHT SURVIVE HER PERILOUS PLUNGE WERE SHE IN TOP PHYSICAL SHAPE...

SPLOOSH!

...BUT, FOR AN ELDERLY WOMAN, THE WATERS BELOW CAN HOLD ONLY-- DEATH!

MEANWHILE, ON THE SURFACE, THE CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS SHE HAD SOUGHT TO STOP, GOES ON--

CAN'T STOP! SLIDING RIGHT AT THE HULK!

BAH! BUG-MAN... TAKES TOO LONG... TO REACH HULK!

HULK IS TIRED... OF WAITING... FOR BUG-MAN-- SO HULK... WILL SMASH BUG-MAN... FROM HERE--

WHAT IN--?!

T-THE VERY LAKE HEAVES BENEATH THE ICE!

THIS IS NOT MY DOING!

NO, IT IS THE HULK'S!

--BY SMASHING ICE... ON WHICH BUG-MAN... SLIDES!!

KERAKK!!

HOLY HANNAH, THE HULK'S NOT ONLY SHATTERED THE ICE COVERING THE WHOLE BLAMED LAKE-- BUT THE AFTERSHOCK'S MANAGED TO TOSS ME SKY HIGH AS WELL!

NOT TO MENTION AWAY FROM THE HULK!

THE TILTING, TEETERING ICE OFFERS ADVANTAGES TO OTHERS AMONG THE CONTESTANTS ALSO.

I KEPT MY FOOTING LONG ENOUGH TO REACH OUT AND TOUCH WATER-WITCH! THAT MEANS I WIN!

NO!

YOU ARE OFF-BALANCE, GOALIE, DUE TO YOUR OWN TEAMMATE'S FURY! YET MY AIM IS TRUE!

BOULDER'S STONE-- GETTING BY ME-- INTO THE NET! I'VE LOST!

ONE OF MY ATHLETES HAS TRIUMPHED, MOLE MAN!

YET SO HAS ONE OF MY OUTCASTS! WE ARE EVEN THUS FAR, KALA!

THE SCORE IS TIED!

THWIP

ONE ON ONE SO FAR, HUH? NOT BAD, BUT THE CONTEST ISN'T OVER YET!

AND IT'S NOT GONNA BE AN EASY WIN UNLESS I CAN TAKE OUT THE HULK BEFORE HE TAKES OUT ME!

'CAUSE, IF I GO DOWN, KALA'S SURE TO SEND OL' GREENSKIN AGAINST THE OUTCASTS!

AND THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT A SORE-LOSER LIKE THE MOLE MAN WILL DO TO GET REVENGE!

BUG-MAN TRIES TO... GET AWAY... FROM HULK... BY SWINGING ON SKY BUCKETS! BUT NO MATTER WHERE... BUG-MAN GOES ...HULK CAN FOLLOW!

OKAY BY ME, BIG BOY! I JUST WANTED TIME TO GET UP THE SLOPE AND WEAVE ME SOME WEB-SKIS--

--THAT I COULD USE TO GET SOME SPEED UP FOR A DOWNHILL RUN RIGHT AT YOUR ROCKHARD KISSER!

NOW DON'T MOVE AND SPOIL IT ALL, JADE-JAWS!

'CAUSE SPIDER-MAN'S ON HIS WAY!

WOOMF

HULK IS NOT... GOING ANYWHERE... BUG-MAN! WHY... SHOULD HE?

WHEN... BUG-MAN HAS BEEN... STUPID ENOUGH ...TO COME... RIGHT TO ...HULK??

HE'S GOT A :GNNGG: POINT THERE!

HULK...DOES NOT UNDERSTAND... WHY BUG-MAN FIGHTS! HULK DOES... NOT FEEL LIKE... FIGHTING! HULK... IS NOT... MAD AT BUG-MAN... OR AT ANYBODY!

BUT KALA... TELLS HULK THAT BUG-MAN... MUST DIE! HULK IS... SORRY, BUG-MAN! HULK... MUST DO... AS KALA SAYS!

THE GIANT JADE HANDS BEGIN TO SQUEEZE TOGETHER...

...WHILE 'BOMBSLED' SEEKS TO GAIN YET ANOTHER POINT FOR KALA!

MY FLAME-CANNONS ARE KEEPING MY OPPONENT BACK!

I MAY COMPLETE MY DOWN-HILL RUN WITH EASE!

NOT SO, BOMBSLED! YOU CAN ONLY BE CONFIDENT OF WINNING IF THE CHANNEL DOWN WHICH YOU RACE IS CLEAR!

THE SNOW PACKED AND SMOOTH!

BUT THE DIAMONDHARD HANDS OF DIGGER CAN EASILY CARVE A NEW CHANNEL FROM THE SNOW --

-- DIVERTING YOUR COURSE AND PREVENTING YOU FROM EVER FINISHING YOUR RUN!

HE'S RIGHT! TO WIN I HAVE TO REACH THE BOTTOM, BUT HE HAS ONLY TO STOP ME TO MAKE ME LOSE!

BUT, EVEN AS 'BOMBSLED' APPROACHES THE NEW CHANNEL...

CLEAR A PATH FOR THE MISTRESS' CHAMPION, FIRE BROTHERS!

FWOOSH

...THE LAVA MEN AGAIN INTERFERE IN THE COMPETITION!

NO! MY CHANNEL'S BLASTED! BOMBSLED HAS NOT BEEN DIVERTED FROM HIS COURSE!

THAT MEANS I WIN!

BUT, THOUGH IT BRINGS US THAT MUCH CLOSER TO SAVING BRAD'S BELOVED, THERE CAN BE NO PRIDE IN A "VICTORY" SO CHEAPLY WON!

CURSE YOU, KALA! I CHALLENGE THIS VICTORY!

DO SO AND OUR SUB-TERRANEAN WAR SHALL RESUME, LEVELLING BOTH OUR KINGDOMS! THE SCORE STANDS AT TWO TO ONE, MOLE MAN!

SO SHALL KALA CLAIM HER LONG-SOUGHT PRIZE--ETERNAL YOUTH!

YET THERE IS STILL TIME FOR THE SCORE TO BE TIED, OR EVEN FOR THE CONTEST TO SHIFT IN THE MOLE MAN'S FAVOR!

SKIER GOT PAST MY SNOWMOUND, BUT HE HAS NOT YET REACHED THE BOTTOM OF THE SLOPE! I MAY STILL STOP HIM, IF ONLY I CAN CREATE A SNOWSLIDE IN TIME!

RRUMBLE

LANDSLIDE IS TRYING TO BRING THE ENTIRE SLOPE DOWN ON ME! BUT I'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING!

AT THAT MOMENT, AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SLOPE, BEFORE THE JUDGE'S STAND...

THE SURFACE WOMAN APPEARING IN THE GLOW OF THE MOLE MAN'S TRANSPORTER! AND HER YOUTH AND BEAUTY, STOLEN BY MY AGING RAY, HAVE BEEN RESTORED TO HER! BUT, HOW--??

I'M NOT SURE MYSELF, KALA--

--BUT I DO KNOW THAT NOW BRAD AND THE OTHERS HAVE NO NEED TO GO ON FIGHTING FOR YOU!

YOU ARE A FOOL, HEATHER RYAN, IF YOU BELIEVE THAT I WILL ALLOW MY "BARGAINING CHIP" TO SLIP FROM MY GRASP!

WHEN ALL I NEED DO TO REGAIN MY HOSTAGE-- AND CONTROL OVER MY ATHLETES -- IS ONCE AGAIN TURN YOU TO A WITHERED OLD CRONE WITH MY AGING RAY!

N-NO! YOU COULDN'T! YOU CAN'T!!

BRAD!!

THAT SCREAM-- IT'S HEATHER! SHE'S YOUNG AGAIN -- AND BEING MENACED BY KALA!

I'VE GOT TO REACH HER!

AND THE VERY POWER POLES KALA EQUIPPED ME WITH ARE GOING TO HELP ME CUT THROUGH LANDSLIDE'S MAN-MADE AVALANCHE TO DO IT!

FINISH

SKIER HAS REACHED THE BOTTOM! HE'S WON!

THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT NOW, LANDSLIDE!

I'M NOT SKIING FOR KALA ANYMORE!

THIS RACE IS FOR HEATHER!

THEN YOU RACE IN VAIN, BRAD ROSSI, FOR YOU WILL NEVER REACH YOUR BELOVED IN TIME!

TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL! AS IF DRAWING ONE COLLECTIVE BREATH, THE SPECTATORS STARE MOTIONLESS, UNABLE TO ACT!

KALA'S FINGER TIGHTENS ON THE TRIGGER OF HER AGING RAY...

...BRAD ROSSI'S SKIS SLICE THE SNOW...

...AND HEATHER RYAN KNOWS HER VERY LIFE IS IN QUESTION!

MEANWHILE, FORGOTTEN ON THE SLOPES ABOVE...

HULK... MUST KILL... BUG-MAN!

A-AND HE'S DOING IT, TOO! CRUSHING MY RIBS! MAKING IT HARD FOR ME TO BREATHE! I-I'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING TO MAKE HIM LET ME GO!

T-THERE! MANAGED TO GET MY FEET UP-- BRACED AGAINST HIS CHEST! NOW-- GOT TO EXERT ALL MY SPIDER-STRENGTH--

--AND PUSH LIKE I'VE NEVER PUSHED BEFORE!

BUG-MAN HAS... BROKEN HULK'S... GRIP??

Y-YEAH! SURPRISED ME, TOO, GREENSKIN! BUT THAT'S NOTHING COMPARED TO THE SHOCK YOU'RE ABOUT TO RECEIVE!

HUH? WHAT ...DOES BUG-MAN...

--MEAN??

I MEAN THAT MY KICK ALSO UPSET YOUR DELICATE BALANCE ON THE VERY EDGE OF THE SLOPE, HULK! EVEN YOU CAN'T FIGHT GRAVITY!

HULK IS... FALLING??

ROLLING WOULD BE THE MORE PRECISE WORD FOR IT, JADE JAWS! HAVE A NICE TUMBLE!

AND DON'T FORGET TO WRITE ME A POSTCARD WHEN YOU HIT BOTTOM!

ARRGH!

UNLIKE THE PROVERBIAL ROLLING STONE, THE INCREDIBLE HULK DOES GATHER THE MASS OF THE MOUNTAINSIDE TO HIM AS HE TUMBLES UNCONTROLLABLY--

--TOWARD THE VERY JUDGE'S STAND HOUSING KALA AND THE MOLE MAN!

SEEING THE GIANT SNOWBALL COMING, THE MOLE MAN FLEES WITHOUT INFORMING HIS OPPONENT...

...JUST AS SHE WOULD HAVE DONE WERE THEIR POSITIONS REVERSED!

AND SO, WHEN THE HULK-FILLED MASS OF PACKED SNOW STRIKES THE JUDGE'S STAND, KALA FINDS HERSELF SUDDENLY ROBBED OF HER WEAPON AND HER EQUILIBRIUM...

WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE DARKLING DEPTHS--??!

KER-WHAM!

AND THE MIGHTY HULK FINDS HIS DOWNWARD MOTION ARRESTED, AND HIMSELF INEXPLICABLY FREE!

OH, SWELL! THE HULK'S UP AND ON HIS FEET AGAIN!

THAT WAS MY BEST SHOT, AND THE BIG GREEN GALOOT'S NOT EVEN STUNNED!

THE HULK IS BETWEEN BRAD AND HEATHER!

WE MUST HELP THEM!

STAY BACK, EVERYONE-- OR HULK WILL SMASH!

WE WILL PULL YOU FREE OF THE SNOW, MASTER!

HEATHER!

I-I'M ALL RIGHT, BRAD!

LOOK TO OUR DEFENSES! KALA'S TREACHERY IS LIMITLESS!

INDEED, THE WELL-ARMED LAVA MEN MOVE QUICKLY, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE MOMENTARY CONFUSION TO PREPARE A NEW ATTACK ON THEIR MISTRESS' FOES...

...WHEN ONE AMONG THEIR NUMBER SUDDENLY REALIZES...

KALA! QUEEN KALA IS NOT HERE TO LEAD US! WHERE IS OUR QUEEN?

TRY DIGGING BENEATH THAT MOUND OF SNOW THROWN UP BY THE HULK'S COLLISION WITH THE JUDGE'S STAND, HOT STUFF!

EH? HURRY, FOOLS! DIG!!

AND, FRANTIC SECONDS LATER...

MY QUEEN, ARE YOU--? BY THE FIERY PIT!!

WHAT IS IT, YOU FLAMING CRETIN? WHY DO YOU NOT HELP YOUR QUEEN TO HER FEET? WHY DO YOU STARE SO??

WHY? BECAUSE YOUR LOYAL LAVA MEN ARE USED TO TAKING THEIR ORDERS FROM A BEAUTEOUS MONARCH, O KALA!

AND, AT THE MOMENT, YOUR BEAUTY IS MORE OF A *MEMORY* THAN ANYTHING ELSE!

YOU SMIRKING SLUG! WHAT ARE YOU--? OH, GODDESS! NO! I-I CAN FEEL IT! I AM CHANGED! OLD! OLD!

YES-- I'VE WON, DO YOU HEAR?

THE MOLE MAN HAS WON!!

HAVE PITY, MOLE MAN! GRANT ME ACCESS TO YOUR FABLED FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH!

THE FOUNTAIN? WHY NOT? I AM NOT AN EVIL MAN! I'VE NO WISH TO SEE YOU WITHER AND DIE...

I-I'M AFRAID YOU MAY NOT HAVE ANY CHOICE, MOLE MAN!

EH? WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

"I'M HEATHER RYAN! KALA HELD ME HOSTAGE, AGING ME WITH SOME KIND OF RAY, TO MAKE THE ATHLETES FIGHT FOR HER!

"BUT I ESCAPED HER GUARDS, AND STUMBLED THROUGH CAVERNS BELOW THE EARTH UNTIL I FELL INTO A DEEP POOL--

"--WHICH FULLY RESTORED MY YOUTHFUL BODY!

"BUT NO SOONER HAD I CLIMBED FROM THE POOL THAN THE WATERS BROKE THROUGH THE BARRIER THAT CONTAINED THEM...

"AND DRAINED AWAY TOTALLY INTO THE EARTH!"

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH! IT MUST HAVE BEEN! AND NOW IT IS GONE!! GONE!! I WILL BE OLD AND WITHERED FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS!

KALA, THOUGH YOU HAVE MOCKED ME AND SPURNED MY LOVE, STILL WOULD I THAT THIS THING HAD NOT HAPPENED! RISE! OLD YOU ARE--AND UGLY--BUT THERE ARE MANY SUCH IN MY KINGDOM!

YOU-- YOU WOULD STILL HAVE ME THEN?

I DESIRED A QUEEN TO RULE BESIDE ME IN DARK-NESS! IT MATTERS NOT THE WAY SHE LOOKS--

--FOR IN SUBTERRANEA THERE ARE NO LIGHTS TO SEE!

AND, WITH THE WITHERING OF THE ONCE-BEAUTEOUS KALA, HER DRUGGED SLAVE FINDS HIMSELF RELEASED FROM HER CONTROL... AND VERY CONFUSED INDEED!

FUNNY LIGHT IN SKY! LAVA MEN AND PINK-SKINS DISAPPEAR INTO IT!

WHERE IS HULK? WHY IS HE HERE? WHY IS IT ALWAYS SO HARD FOR HULK TO REMEMBER?

I CAN'T ANSWER THAT ONE, GREENSKIN, BUT I CAN TELL YOU THAT YOU'RE IN THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE... WHICH, AT THE MOMENT IS ABOUT A MILE OFF THE GROUND! BEATS ME HOW WE'RE GONNA GET DOWN!

BUG-MAN CANNOT GET DOWN BECAUSE BUG MAN IS NOT HULK!

UH, I WON'T ARGUE WITH YOU THERE!

GOOD! HULK DOES NOT LIKE TALK! TALK CANNOT DO... THIS!!

TROOM

TROOM

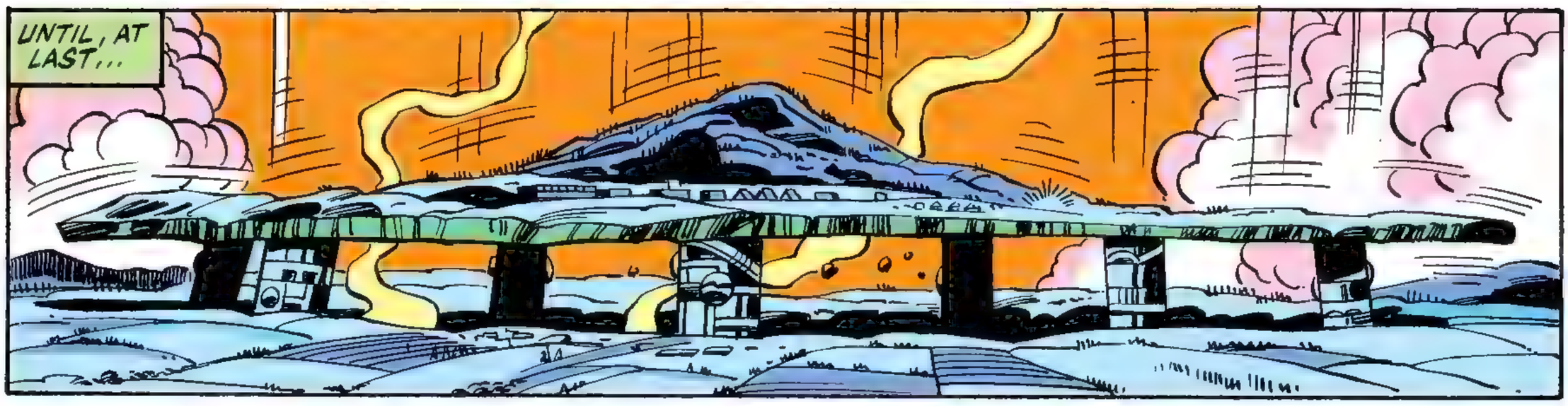
WITH INCREDIBLE INSISTENCE, BACKED BY INDESCRIBABLE MIGHT, THE SUPREMELY POWERFUL HULK HAMMERS AT THE SURFACE UPON WHICH HE STANDS...

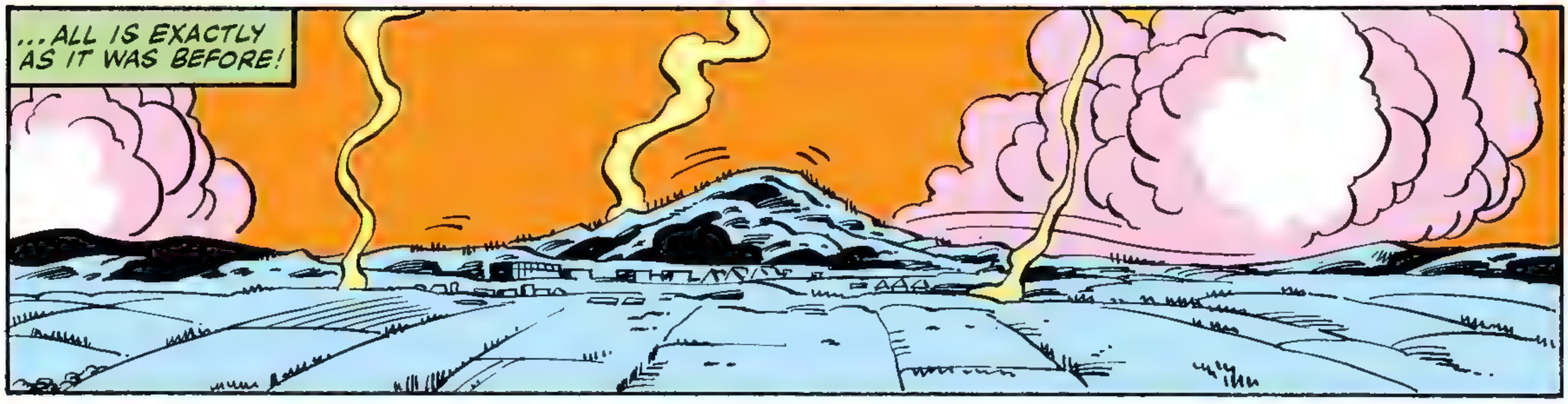
TROOM

...WHILE, BENEATH EACH SUCCEEDINGLY EARTH-SHAKING BLOW--

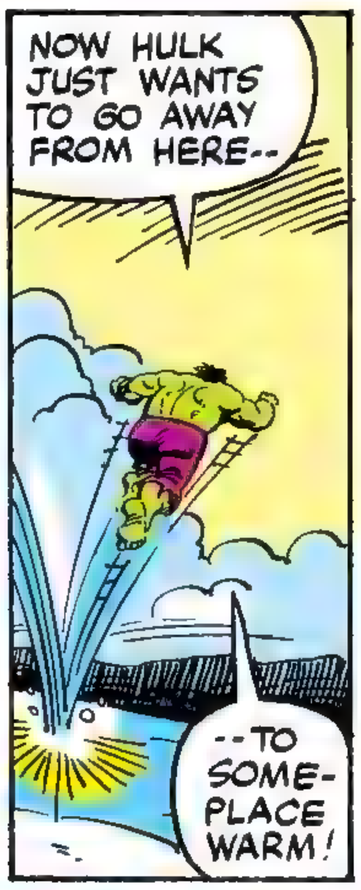
TROOM

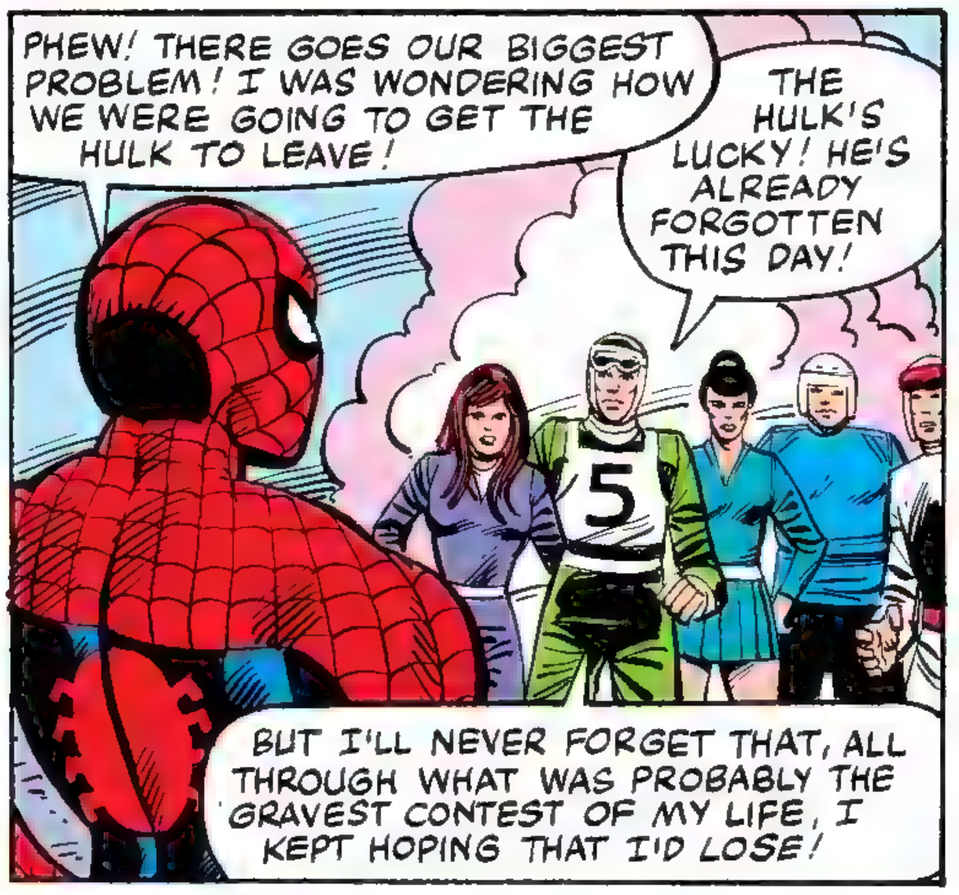
--THE PYLONS HOLDING THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE ALOFT SINK FURTHER BACK INTO THE GROUND...

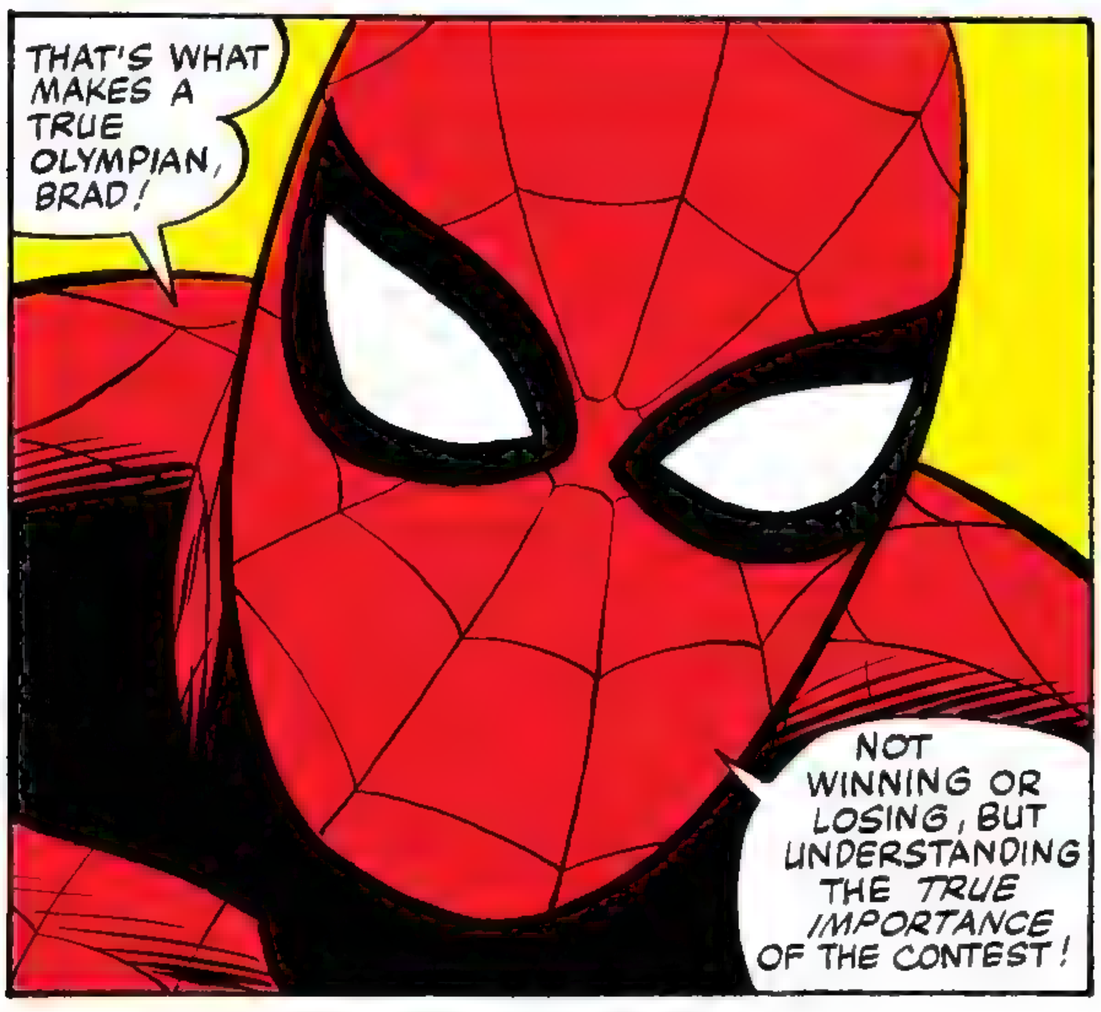

UNTIL, AT LAST...


...ALL IS EXACTLY AS IT WAS BEFORE!

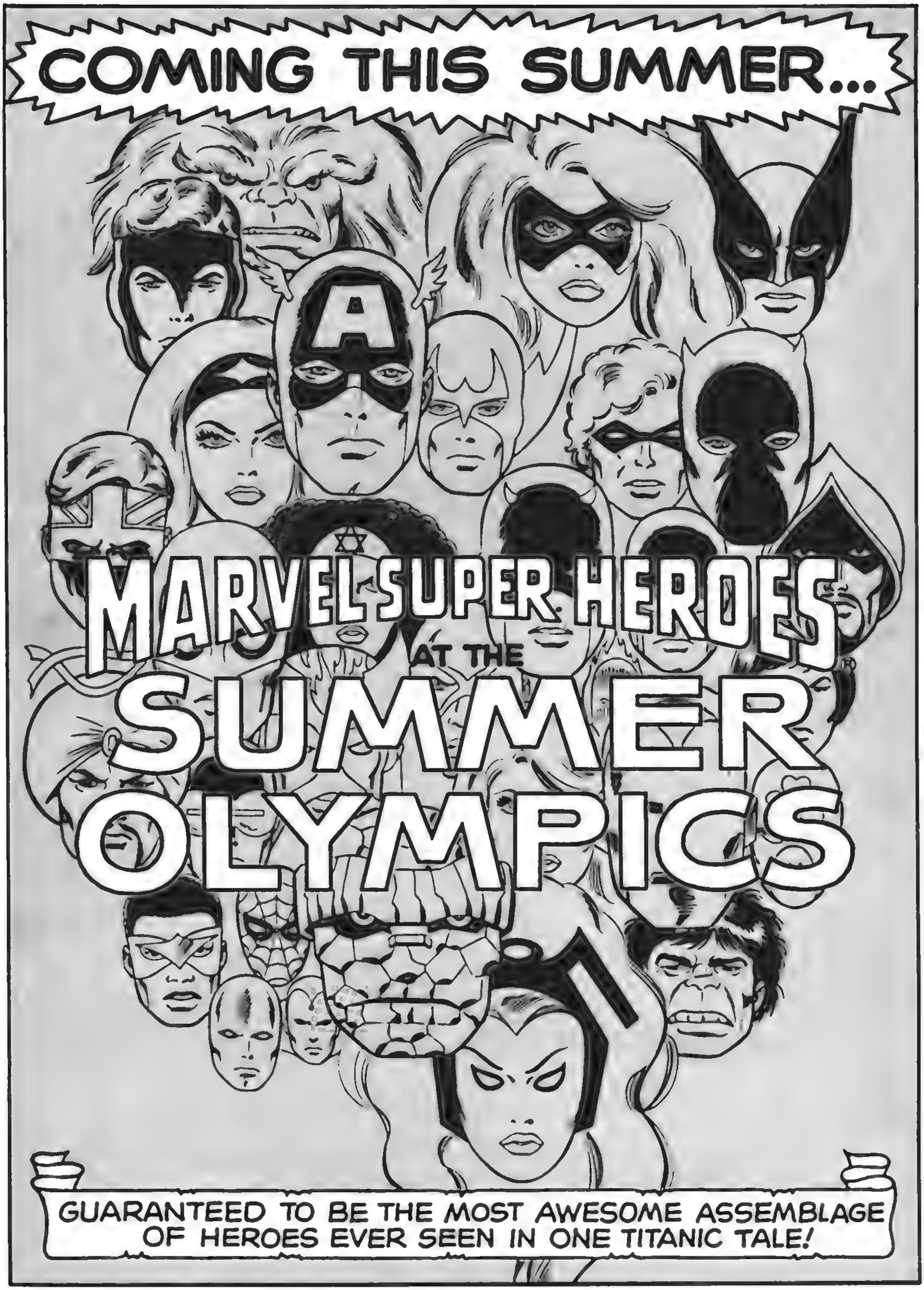
THERE! VILLAGE IS BACK ON GROUND! HULK HAS DONE WHAT PUNY HUMANS COULD NOT!


NOW HULK JUST WANTS TO GO AWAY FROM HERE--
--TO SOME-PLACE WARM!


PHEW! THERE GOES OUR BIGGEST PROBLEM! I WAS WONDERING HOW WE WERE GOING TO GET THE HULK TO LEAVE!
THE HULK'S LUCKY! HE'S ALREADY FORGOTTEN THIS DAY!
5
BUT I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT, ALL THROUGH WHAT WAS PROBABLY THE GRAVEST CONTEST OF MY LIFE, I KEPT HOPING THAT I'D LOSE!


THAT'S WHAT MAKES A TRUE OLYMPIAN, BRAD!
NOT WINNING OR LOSING, BUT UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTEST!

REMEMBER THAT AND YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A CHAMPION--
--WHETHER THEY GIVE YOU A GOLD MEDAL FOR IT OR NOT!
THE END


COMING THIS SUMMER...
MARVEL SUPER HEROES
AT THE
SUMMER
OLYMPICS
GUARANTEED TO BE THE MOST AWESOME ASSEMBLAGE OF HEROES EVER SEEN IN ONE TITANIC TALE!

TURN
8
TURN
3
TURN
4
TURN
5
SIENKIEWICZ/PATTERSON79

Marvel Treasury Edition #25, page 48 original art
by Herb Trimpe & Bruce Patterson

MARVEL TREASURY EDITION

2

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HELMUT--IT'S NO RICKSHAWS--

BAH! IT GOES TOO SLOW! I FEEL MYSELF AGING, DESPITE MY ATMOSPHERE HELMET! THE PACE OF THE CONTEST MUST BE QUICKENED!

STRIKE HULK! STRIKE TO KILL!

EH? DEATH IS NOT REQUIRED TO CLAIM A VICTORY--ONLY DEFEAT!

BUT THE DRUG-MUDDLED HULK KNOWS NOTHING OF THE RULES OF COMBAT! HE KNOWS ONLY THAT HE IS TO OBEY KALA'S EVERY COMMAND...

...AND KALA HAS COMMANDED HIM TO SLAY!

BUG-MAN... MUST... DIE!

WHOA! CLOSE!

IF THE HULK HAD CONNECTED, HE'D HAVE KNOCKED MY HEAD INTO THE NEXT STATE!

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HULK WILL... GET RID... OF STUPID ARMOR!

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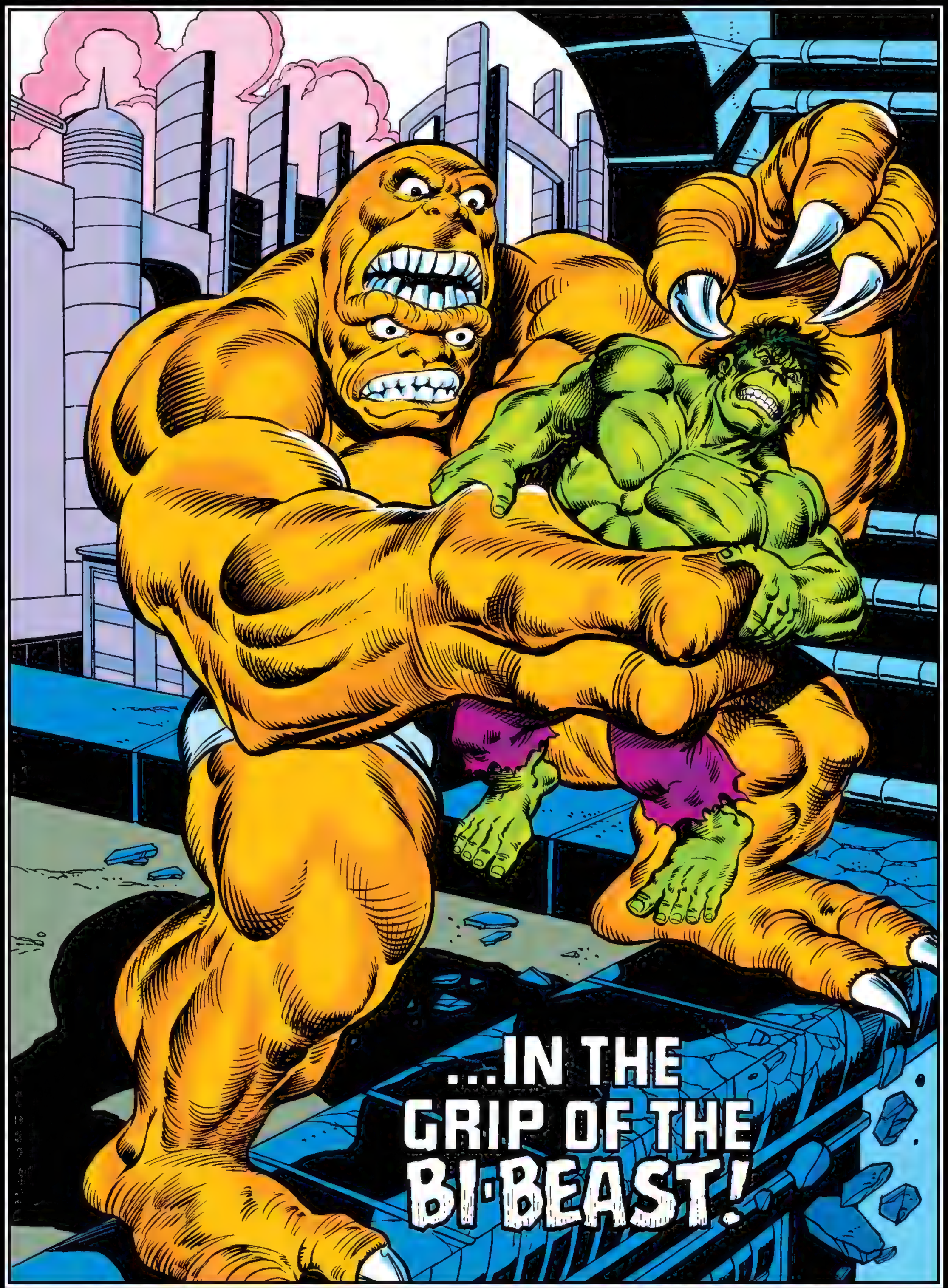
Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

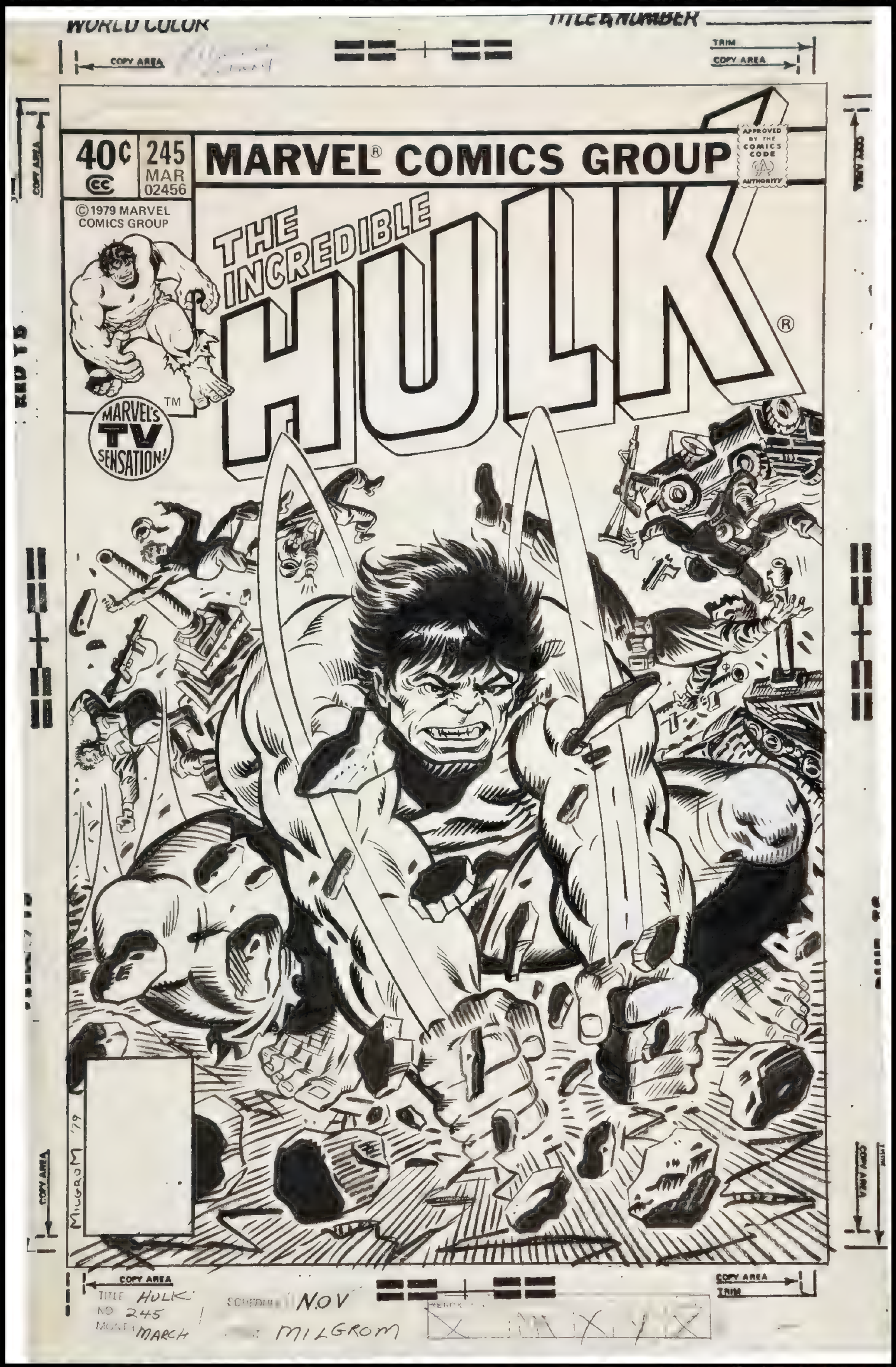
Marvel Treasury Edition #26 (1980) cover
by Al Milgrom

Reprinting *The Incredible Hulk* #167-170

Marvel Treasury Edition #26 (1980) back cover
by Ron Wilson & Pablo Marcos



The Incredible Hulk #245 cover original art
by Sal Buscema



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The Incredible Hulk #245, page 1 original art
by Sal Buscema

Caught in the heart of a ***Nuclear Explosion,*** victim of ***Gamma-Radiation*** gone wild, ***Doctor Robert Bruce Banner*** now finds himself transformed in times of stress into seven feet, one thousand pounds of unfettered ***Fury***—the most powerful creature to ever walk the earth—

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE INCREDIBLE HULK!®

AT FIRST HE IS NO MORE THAN A SPECK ON THE HORIZON...

THEN THE THUNDER OF HIS APPROACH BREAKS ACROSS THE DESERT AS HE COVERS VAST DISTANCES WITH INCREDIBLE LEAPS!

HE HAS TRAVELLED MANY MILES, TRAVERSED MANY FOREIGN LANDS, DRIVEN BY THE RAGE SMOLDERING IN HIS MONSTER'S HEART.

RAGE FANNED INTO FLAME BY AN ENEMY'S RECENT MOCKING WORDS: "THE PLACE YOU KNOW AS GAMMA BASE IS FAR AWAY, AND WITHIN ITS CHAMBERS IS A SPECIMEN TUBE PRESERVING THE LAST REMAINS OF AN ALIEN FEMALE. I BELIEVE YOU KNEW THE DECEASED...?"

JARELLA!

THROOM THROOM THROOM THROOM

BILL & SAL MANTLO BUSCEMA
WRITER-STORYTELLERS-ARTIST

JOE ROSEN, LETTERS
G.ROUSSOS, COLORS

ALLEN MILGROM, EDITOR

JIM SHOOTER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

LF663

THE INCREDIBLE HULK® Vol. 1, No. 245, March, 1980 Issue. Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 575 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK N.Y 10022. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, N.Y. AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly. Copyright © 1979 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 40¢ per copy in the U.S. and Canada. Subscription rate $5.00 for 12 issues. Canada, $6.00. Foreign, $7.00. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this periodical with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THE INCREDIBLE HULK (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP

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The Incredible Hulk #253, page 1 original art
by Sal Buscema

INCREDIBLE HULK 253 LF
HULK #253

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE INCREDIBLE HULK!®

THE CHANGELINGS -- PART II!

- BLUE-SUR-PRINT -

Sal Buscema

LF225

THE INCREDIBLE HULK® Vol. 1, No. 253, November, 1980 issue. (U.S.P.S. 777-600) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee. Publisher. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION 575 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022. Application to mail at Controlled Postage Rates is pending at Sparta, Illinois. Published monthly. Copyright © 1980 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 50¢ per copy in the U.S. and Canada. Subscription rate $6.00 for 12 issues. Canada, $7.00. Foreign, $8.00. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THE INCREDIBLE HULK (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenessses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP

M.S.

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The Incredible Hulk #253, page 5 original art
by Sal Buscema

INCREDIBLE HULK
253
6
IF HULK IS A MONSTER, THEN HULK WILL ACT LIKE A MONSTER! NO MORE FRIENDS! ALL PUNY HUMANS ARE HULK'S ENEMIES, AND HULK WILL SMASH THEM ALL!
BLAST IT, IN MY CONCERN FOR THE OTHERS, I FORGOT MY OWN PSYCHIATRIC PROFILE STUDIES OF THE HULK!
MENTALLY, HE'S LIKE A CHILD--AN AWESOMELY POWERFUL, INCREDIBLY AGGRESSIVE CHILD-- INCAPABLE OF REASON ONCE HE'S TAKEN OVER BY RAGE!
IF I HAD APPROACHED HIM CALMLY, I MIGHT HAVE LEARNED WHAT I NEEDED TO KNOW! NOW THERE'S NO POSSIBILITY OF PREVENTING A FIGHT!
DOC SAMSON HAS ALSO FORGOTTEN ONE OTHER FACT HE'S LEARNED OVER HIS LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE EMERALD BEHEMOTH... THAT THE WORST THING ONE CAN DO IS AROUSE THE HULK'S WRATH!
Sal Buscema
FOR THE MADDER THE HULK GROWS, THE STRONGER HE GETS!
5

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The Incredible Hulk #253, page 9 original art
by Sal Buscema

MILES AWAY, THE FOREST STILL REVERBERATES TO THE DIN OF TITANS CLASHING!

EVEN THOUGH MANY MONTHS AGO I TRANSFERRED SOME OF THE HULK'S POWER TO MYSELF, THE HULK IS STILL STRONGER!

HE'S SHRUGGING OFF EVERY ATTACK AS AN ELEPHANT MIGHT SHRUG OFF A MOSQUITO!

IF ONLY I COULD SOMEHOW SUBLIMATE MY INTELLECT-- BECOME AS SAVAGE AND UNREASONING AS THE HULK-- PERHAPS THEN I MIGHT FIND *MY* POWER INCREASING IN PROPORTION TO MY RAGE!

SAMSON ATTACKS HULK WITH TREE?

SKA-A-A-A

The Incredible Hulk #253, page 10 original art
by Sal Buscema

THEY MUST BE STOPPED! ONLY THEIR MIGHT CAN SAVE THE HUMANS AND WOODGOD NOW!

WOODGOD IN DANGER?! SIREN, WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED--?!

THE DIS-TRAUGHT BIRD-GIRL DOES NOT STOP TO ANSWER! SHE KNOWS THAT EACH PASSING SECOND BRINGS DISASTER EVER CLOSER FOR CHANGELINGS AND HUMANS ALIKE!

CURSE YOUR EMERALD HIDE, HULK-- WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH GENERAL ROSS, BETTY, FRED AND RICK?

ALL HULK DID WAS LEAVE WHEN HULK'S FRIENDS SAID THEY DIDN'T NEED HIM ANYMORE! THEY HATE THE HULK JUST LIKE SAMSON HATES THE HULK!

HUNH? BIRD-GIRL WHO ATTACKED THE HULK IN VILLAGE FLIES AT HULK AGAIN!

BIRD-GIRL TURNED FRED AGAINST HULK! WHAT DOES BIRD-GIRL WANT NOW?

A WINGED-WOMAN--COVERED WITH FEATHERS! WHAT HAVE I STUMBLED INTO?!

THE VALLEY OF THE CHANGELINGS --WHERE THOSE FRIENDS YOU SEEK HAVE NEED OF YOUR POWER NOW!

HULK HAS NO FRIENDS!

YOU ARE WRONG, HULK! THEY *ARE* YOUR FRIENDS, AND THEY ARE NOW IN DANGER FROM WHICH ONLY YOU CAN SAVE THEM!

IF YOU CARE-- FOLLOW ME!

FOR THE SMALLEST FRACTION OF A SECOND, THE COMBAT-ANTS HESITATE... THEN FOLLOW THEY DO!

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

BIOGRAPHIES

BILL MANTLO

From the mid-'70s through the late-'80s, Bill Mantlo established himself as one of the most dedicated writers in the comics industry, writing hundreds of stories across dozens of titles, primarily for Marvel Comics.

Mantlo broke into comics as a colorist, but it wasn't long before he was given a crack at writing a fill-in story, a "Sons of the Tiger" story in the black-and-white *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* magazine, and his true comics talent began to emerge. The quality of his work led to his installation as that book's regular writer, a tenure that included the notable achievement of introducing comics' first Puerto Rican hero, the White Tiger.

After achieving notoriety within the Marvel offices as a guy who could knock out credible fill-in scripts at a moment's notice, Mantlo was given more regular work. One early highlight was his 20-issue tenure on *Iron Man* that began the Golden Avenger's return to prominence. As one might expect from someone with such a volume of work, Mantlo was game to take on projects others dismissed, and he did it with an unfeigned aplomb that elevated the work.

It was on two licensed titles that Mantlo built his legacy. Inspired by a toy given to his son at Christmas, Mantlo lobbied Marvel to adapt Micronauts into an ongoing series. The award-winning epic he spun with artistic luminaries like Michael Golden and Pat Broderick is still highly revered by comics fandom as is his even longer run on *Rom*, wherein he developed a universe filled with Spaceknights, Dire Wraith monsters and outer space intrigue. Other notable credits in Mantlo's career include *Incredible Hulk*, *Alpha Flight* and *Spectacular Spider-Man.*

Just as Mantlo had begun a new career as a public defender with the New York City Legal Aid Society, he was struck by a hit-and-run driver and went into a weeks-long coma from severe head trauma. He has since been under constant medical care. The comics community has led multiple fundraisers to aid in the continuing care of a talented writer who is missed by his many fans.

SAL BUSCEMA

Without a doubt one of comics' most prolific artists, "Our Pal" Sal Buscema joined Marvel in 1968 shortly after his elder brother, John. Tackling inking duties on *Silver Surfer* and *Fantastic Four*, including the all-time classic *Silver Surfer* #4, Buscema quickly graduated to penciling. He was an anchor of the Marvel line in the 1970s with long runs on books like *Captain America*, *Marvel Team-Up* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and a 100-plus issue run on *The Incredible Hulk.* Buscema was also behind defining the tone on early issues of *The Defenders*, *Rom* and *The New Mutants.* His career as one of Marvel's most versatile artists lasted throughout the '70s and into the '90s. In 1988, he returned to *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and over the next ten years penciled every issue but two from #134 through #238 (and inked the vast majority as well!) Although he retired in the late '90s, readers can still see his name on comics credits from time to time, including inking work on the cult hit *Spider-Girl*.

STEVE DITKO

The incomparable Steve Ditko began his career in comics in the 1950s, drawing for Charlton Comics and some of the usual science fiction, horror and mystery titles of the era. His style, however, was anything but "the usual," and it would prove to be as instantly recognizable as some of the iconic characters he would later introduce. His clean and lean figure work somehow took on a life singularly its own, often springing idiosyncratically across the page, channeling the kind of comic art energy that few others dared to attempt.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1927, Ditko studied illustration under Jerry Robinson at the Cartoonists and Illustrators School in New York. In 1953, he embarked on his career in comic storytelling by penciling odd, otherworldly tales in books like Charlton's *Space Adventures* and *Strange Suspense Stories*. His reputation grew as a draftsman who mixed powerfully evocative images into otherwise standard comics fare.

Recruited to join Stan Lee's small stable of artists in 1958, Steve's nuances were a noticeable contrast to Jack Kirby's boldness, and together they acted as the line's prime artistic movers. New titles like *Tales to Astonish* and *Tales of Suspense* joined overhauled series like *Journey Into Mystery* and *Strange Tales*, with Steve's eerie, *Twilight Zone*-tinged stories adding a hint of ominous paranoia to the texture of those anthologies. His style was so one-of-a-kind that he eventually got a book to call completely his own: In 1961, *Amazing Adventures* was retitled *Amazing Adult Fantasy* and given over completely to Ditko and Lee's collaborations.

But it was a certain wall-crawler who premiered later the next June that would confirm Steve Ditko's place in comics history. In 1962, in the pages of *Amazing Fantasy*, he and Stan Lee brought to life Peter Parker, the Amazing Spider-Man. The troubled teen hero proved so popular that he was given his own series, the first 38 issues of which are ensconced as one of the all-time great runs in comics history. Another Ditko character, Doctor Strange, was an incredible influence on artists for years to come, with Ditko's mind-bending delineations of the Master of the Mystic Arts setting all kinds of (unintended) standards for pop art psychedelia.

Leaving Marvel Comics in 1966, he worked for Charlton again, drawing titles like *Captain Atom* and *Blue Beetle*. In the '70s, he worked for DC, launching *Shade, the Changing Man*, and independently published tales of his character, Mr. A, who exemplified Ditko's firm belief in Ayn Randian Objectivism. In the latter part of his career, he returned to Marvel, working there in the late '70s and throughout the '80s. Ditko was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame in 1994 and continued to add to his prolific body of work through self-publishing until his death in 2018.

STEVEN GRANT

A self-described "accidental" comic book writer, Steven Grant dabbled in comics writing in the early '70s for indie imprints before getting work as a music and film critic for newspapers in his hometown of Madison, Wisconsin. He kept in touch

with his comics-loving associates in the CPL Gang, who urged him to go further in the comics industry. A 1976 meeting with Marvel editor Marv Wolfman didn't yield any opportunities, but while visiting CPL pal Roger Stern in 1979 opportunity struck. Stern, an editor newly ensconced at Marvel, offered Grant a gig writing an issue of *Marvel Two-In-One* that was running late. After turning in his script for the Thing/Moon Knight team-up, more work came his way as he helped Stern get his titles back on schedule. His first regular gigs were Spider-Man's adventures in *Marvel Team-Up* and the young readers book *Spidey Super Stories*. Grant also wrote issues of *Spider-Woman*, *Incredible Hulk*, *Battlestar Galactica*, and he co-wrote the *Marvel Super Hero Contest of Champions* limited series. One of his biggest projects was scribing the *Life of Pope John Paul II* one-shot in 1983. That same year he launched his own character, Whisper, for Capital Comics and then First Comics, and was handed the reins to *American Flagg!* by its creator Howard Chaykin. In 1986, Grant made a huge splash with artist Mike Zeck on their *Punisher* miniseries. The fan-favorite series ignited the Punisher's popularity, raising him to the ranks of one of Marvel's most popular characters. Grant followed up with the acclaimed *Punisher: Return to Big Nothing* graphic novel and turns on *Punisher War Journal*, *Punisher War Zone* and the ongoing *Punisher* series. He branched out to DC in the '90s, rebooting *Challengers of the Unknown* and *Manhunter*. Grant's series *2 Guns*, published by BOOM! Studios, was adapted into a 2013 film starring Denzel Washington and Mark Wahlberg.

MARK GRUENWALD

Few can lay claim to the influence that Mark Gruenwald had on Marvel as an editor, writer and artist during the 1980s and '90s. Born in 1953 in Wisconsin, Gruenwald's love of comics manifested in a fanzine titled *Omniverse*, which led to writing articles for the DC-published fanzine *Amazing World of DC Comics*. In 1978, he was hired by Jim Shooter to serve as an assistant editor at Marvel. In addition, Gruenwald also scripted several titles. He was ongoing writer of *Spider-Woman* in 1978-79, he kicked off a long run co-scripting *Marvel Two-In-One* with the "Project Pegasus" arc, and he co-wrote a handful of stories in *What If?* and *Thor*. Early in his career, Gruenwald also penciled a number of titles, including issues of *Questprobe*, *Incredible Hulk* and *Marvel Team-Up*. His major art credit was drawing the 1983 *Hawkeye* miniseries, which he also scripted.

A well-known continuity hound and office jokester, Gruenwald gave T-shirts emblazoned with the catchphrase "Continuity or Bust" to his office peers. His deep love of the Marvel mythos didn't stop with T-shirts. As a writer, he delved deep into Marvel's past with his "Untold Tales of the Marvel Universe" backup stories in *What If?*, as well as the secret origin of the High Evolutionary in the 1989 "Evolutionary War" event. Gruenwald's biggest achievement in grappling with the encyclopedic history of Marvel was his development of *The Official Handbook of the Marvel Universe*, a series compiling the backgrounds of virtually every Marvel character. Eager fans devoured *OHOTMU*, and the series' success led to multiple sequels and updates that continue today.

Gruenwald's biggest accomplishment as a writer came with *Captain America*, a title which he wrote for an astonishing 137-issue run from 1985-1995. He also kicked off long runs on *Quasar* and the New Universe title *D.P. 7*. His critically acclaimed magnum opus, *Squadron Supreme*, a 12-issue miniseries, reestablished the alternate-reality Marvel team. When Tom DeFalco was named editor-in-chief in 1988, Gruenwald became his second-in-command with the title of executive editor. As an editor, he worked closely to mentor young writers, bringing an unforgettable sense of fun to the deadline slog. Tragically, Gruenwald passed away in 1996 due to an unknown heart ailment. In his will, he requested his ashes be mixed with ink used in the first printing of the *Squadron Supreme* trade paperback.

HERB TRIMPE

He may not have dreamed up as many characters as Kirby or Ditko, or had as groundbreaking a style as Steranko or Adams—and he'll be the first one to tell you that! But Herb Trimpe is easily one of the most recognizable comic artists of all time, owing to the incredible popularity of two titles (*Incredible Hulk*, *G.I. Joe*) he made successes.

Herb joined Marvel's production department fresh out of the armed forces, where he served in the Air Force as a weatherman from 1962-1966, providing weather telemetry to forces in Vietnam. In between his office duties, he landed fill-in work as a penciler and inker on books like *Kid Colt, Outlaw* and *Marvel Super-Heroes* #16, featuring the Phantom Eagle, a collaboration with writer Gary Friedrich that played off Herb's well-known interest in drawing airplanes.

He also inked several books, most notably over Marie Severin's Hulk in *Tales to Astonish*. Several months later, Herb got the book as his own, and from 1968 to 1975, the Hulk's tales were drawn under his auspices. He combined an E.C.-influenced approach to layouts with Kirby-esque dynamics, a style that became even more pronounced when he began inking his own pencils with issue #117. Through it all, he never strayed from the elements of the character he felt had already been perfected: the pathos of a tragic figure's Jekyll/Hyde dual personality. During his tenure, he came up with the Hulkbusters, did character designs for the likes of Wendigo and Zzzax, and also drew the first appearance of Wolverine in *Incredible Hulk* #180-182.

After the Hulk, Trimpe drew *Godzilla*, *Shogun Warriors* and *The Defenders*. He also drew the first several issues of Marvel UK's *Captain Britain*. As the 1980s began, Trimpe drew a much-beloved run on *Marvel Team-Up*, but it was the launch of *G.I. Joe* that would make Trimpe's some of the most seen comic art of the decade. An instant hit, selling hundreds of thousands of copies over multiple printings, it was the start of an incredibly successful, long-running title. In addition to the early *G.I. Joe* issues, Trimpe drew its spinoff title, *G.I. Joe Special Missions*.

Another highlight in Trimpe's career was providing breakdown art in collaboration with Barry Windsor-Smith on the *Machine Man* limited series. Later in the decade, his workload scaled back to spot penciling and inking jobs. In 2002, he was awarded the Humanitarian of the Year Award at the San Diego Comic-Con for services rendered as a chaplain at Ground Zero after 9/11. In his retirement, he continued to delight fans with the occasional cover or short story. Trimpe passed away in 2015, leaving a legacy as one of Marvel's most accomplished storytellers.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

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THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over America, a new storytelling medium was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States. At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary creators as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee.

GOLDEN AGE ALL-WINNERS VOLS. 1-4
GOLDEN AGE CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-6
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GOLDEN AGE YOUNG ALLIES VOLS. 1-2

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the Golden Age retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, the Atlas Era had it all!

ATLAS ERA BATTLEFIELD VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA BLACK KNIGHT/YELLOW CLAW VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA HEROES VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA JUNGLE ADVENTURE VOLS. 1-3
ATLAS ERA MENACE VOL. 1
ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE MARVEL AGE

In August 1961, change hit newsstands: *The Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. They were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves — and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different — the beginning of the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-23
ANT-MAN/GIANT-MAN VOLS. 1-3
THE AVENGERS VOLS. 1-22
THE BLACK PANTHER VOLS. 1-3
BROTHER VOODOO VOL. 1
CAPTAIN AMERICA VOLS. 1-14
CAPTAIN MARVEL VOLS. 1-6
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THE INHUMANS VOLS. 1-2
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KA-ZAR VOLS. 1-2
KILLRAVEN VOL. 1
LUKE CAGE VOLS. 1-3
MARVEL RARITIES VOL. 1
MARVEL TEAM-UP VOLS. 1-6
MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE VOLS. 1-6
THE MIGHTY THOR VOLS. 1-21
MS. MARVEL VOLS. 1-2
NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
NOT BRAND ECHH VOL. 1
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK VOLS. 1-2
SGT. FURY VOLS. 1-4
THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN VOLS. 1-5
SPIDER-WOMAN VOLS. 1-2
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THE TOMB OF DRACULA VOL. 1
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